







# **WORLD FAMOUS LOVE LETTERS**

**VOLUME I**



**NAWAB SALAR JUNG BAHADUR**

**DELHI**

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## EDITORS' APOLOGIA

In writing this, we are very jealous of ourselves, having ever been so inclined unto this passion, that though our experience in the power of it, may make us more knowing in it than those that have never felt the effects of it, yet we very much doubt our own weaknesses may show themselves in the discourse of love, more evidently than in any other in which we are less concerned. But it is better to speak passionately and perhaps inadvisedly, of that we know, than universally, darkly, and ignorantly of those that we feel nothing of; and therefore, what we say must be what we hear from others, not our own. we could wish that all men would do the like; write and speak what they know in themselves, and leave the Judgment to others.

It is difficult to define 'Love.' But we may say that in the soul, it is a ruling Passion; in the mind it is a close sympathy and affinity; in the body, a wholly secret and delicate longing to possess what we love.

There are, however, very few letters in this volume. In these days the limitations of space are more exacting than ever. For this reason also we have made no attempt to explore *autobiography*.

No letter, surely, approaching these in sincerity and abandonment, were ever written with the belief that it would be shared by any other soul on earth than one. A self is revealed, under the spell of an enchantment—it can neither comprehend nor resist, and as remote from vanity,

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caution, compromise and the conventions of the world as that of dream.

As for literature the tenderest, and most revealing of love letters may be wholly innocent of it. The most tragic also. Misspelt, reckless of grammar, they have sprung like the Fountain of the Muses as blood from an artery, from the very heart, without the least care or thought except for the loved one. Helter-skelter, i's undotted, stops wanting, paper tear-stained, p's and q's incontinently unminded, they pelt along; and oddly enough are often not only usually condensed, but wildly original. Are they any the less human, true, tender, and consoling for that? Love may revel in humour, delight in wit, adore the fantastic, welcome the rash, forgive the solemn and the high-faulting; but it will instantly stiffen at the informative, gib at preachments, and it abhors the superions. Love is the most intensive desire of the soul to enjoy beauty, and where it is reciprocal, is the most entire and exact union of hearts.

We do not put forward these letters as being the best letters in the English language. We recommend the present volume in this sense only, we have liked them all ourselves, and we are not without the hope that a collection of letters may interest others as it has interested us. If however, by any oversight, some improvements are omitted, it is because we were fighting against time and if you all like this volume, we might present you the second volume which would make up the first. Till then—Au Revoir !

*The Editors*

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*Love wakes men, once a life-time each ;  
They lift their heavy lids, and look ;  
And lo, what one sweet page can teach,  
They read with joy, then shut the book.*

# THE ROMANCE OF ABELARD AND HELOISE

## INTRODUCTION

NAWAB SALAR JUNG BAHADUR

It is a tragic tale of two lovers of Medieval France. Though eight hundred years have rolled by, yet the story has never yet been read without emotion. Abelard who was one of the greatest philosophers of his time, may be regarded as one of the greatest lovers of all time. Heloise stands as an eternal monument of patience and the silent smokeless sacrifice of self.

In the year 1079, Peter Abelard was born at Pallet (Paris), the eldest son of Breton Parents, inheriting nobility and wealth. His quickness of perception grew with the boy into young manhood, and he rejected his inheritance for a life of learning, becoming skilled into dialectic—the name under which Philosophy was the chief liberal study in the schools. He early chose for himself the wandering pilgrimage of the scholar rather than the easy settled ways of the rich. Wherever the reputation of some famous teacher drew him, he rambled. About 1100, his wanderings brought

him to Paris, less than twenty years of age. There, in the school of Notre Dame, Abelard studied under William of Champeaux, a disciple of 'realism'. But Abelard with the quickness of perception and intellect soon surpassed his master, and engaging him in argument, he overcame him in a discussion which started the downfall of realism. Then while twenty two, Abelard set up a rival school at Milun, and soon moved from there to Corbeil nearer Paris.

From this victory Abelard stepped readily into the chair at Notre Dame and became Canon of Paris about 1115. The fame of Abelard now spread throughout the continent and his work as a teacher stood unsurpassed. Pupils flocked to him from everywhere, until it is said they numbered more than five thousand,—a motley picturesque crowd indeed, thronging Paris just to hear Abelard talk. "It has been estimated that a Pope, nineteen cardinals and more than fifty archbishops and bishops were at one time among his pupils."

Abelard is described in the words of Charles de Remusat: "A man with a large forehead, with a vivid and fiery looks, with a

noble bearing, whose beauty still preserved the brilliancy of youth, while, taking the more marked traits and deeper hues of full virility, the simple elegance of his manners, which were by turns affable and haughty ; an attitude imposing, gracious and not without that indolent negligence which follows confidence in success, and the habitual exercise of powers; the respect of those who followed in his train, who were arrogant to all except him, the eager curiosity of the multitude ; all, when he went to his lectures or returned to his dwellings, followed by his disciples, still charmed by his speech,—all announced a master the most powerful in the schools, the most renowned in the world, the most loved in the city. The crowds in the street stopped to gaze at him as he passed by ; in order to see him, the people rushed to the doors of their houses, and women gazed at him from their windows. Paris had adopted him as her child, as her ornament and her light.”

Until now Abelard had lived an intellectual life, free from physical indulgence, or passion. Now at the very height of his intellectual power and achievement, he was to meet with



life of another sort, life which was to bring about his downfall.

Heloise is harder to trace than Abelard ; although she was destined to be nearly as great. She was born in Paris, probably about 1101—the year following Abelard's arrival in the city. She was placed in the care of nuns at Argentiul, to be instructed in the best possible manner. A bright pupil, she learned rapidly, and promised great things in intellectual vigour as well as physical beauty. Leaving the convent, Helosie went to live with her uncle Fulbert, a stupid canon. So learned and beautiful a girl, then only seventeen years of age, was sure to attract the attention of a scholar like Abelard, particularly when his mind and yearnings were turning from Philosophy to other things. In his own words :—"There existed in Paris a lady, named Heloise, niece of a certain canon, who was called Fulbert, who in his love for her, had neglected nothing in order to give her the most complete and brilliant education. She was far from being lowest in beauty, and was certainly the highest in literary attainments. Such knowledge of literature

the more highly commended a young girl because it is as rare in women, and had made her the most noted in the whole kingdom. Therefore, observing that she was endowed with all those charms that are wont to attract lovers, I regarded her as a more proper person to engage in enterprise of love with me, and believed that I could easily accomplish my purpose. My name was so great, the graces of youth and perfection of form gave me a superiority so unquestionable, that from whatever woman I might have honoured with my love I should have feared no repulse."

Abelard discovered an affection for this girl, and she responded with the deepest and most devoted love for him. Under the blind eye of Fulbert, Abelard—characterizing the placing of Heloise in his care as "confiding a tender lamb to a famished wolf"—proceeded to seduce Heloise. "To say all in a word, at first we were united in one house, then in mind. Under the pretext of study, we were wholly free for love, and the retirement which love sought, zeal for reading offered. The books opened, there were more words of love than

of reading, more kisses than precepts, love was reflected in each other's eyes oftener than the purpose of reading directed them to the written page . . . . . we passed through all the phases and degrees of love ; all the inventions were put under requisition ; no refinement was left untried. We were the more ardent in the enjoyment of these pleasures, because they were new to us, and we experienced no satiety. It was very tedious to me to go to my lessons, and it was equally laborious, for the hours of the night were given to love, and those of the day to study."

His love thus took the fire from his lectures in philosophy, and since he sang of it in verses which he took no trouble to conceal, all Paris soon knew of a situation which was still unknown to Fulbert. A word of explanation concerning the position of woman and the church may serve to make matters a little clearer here : The church had condemned woman as an evil influence, and had forbidden her disciples to marry. Abelard had his eyes on an ecclesiastical career, and to marry would dash all those hopes to the ground. Mistresses and alliances without number were

permitted to priest or student, but a legal union was sternly forbidden. Heloise knew this quite as well as Abelard, and although at this time Abelard did not offer to sacrifice his career for her honour, Heloise did not ask it and would not have accepted it.

Of course his stupidity not withstanding, Fulbert had to know what was so evident to everyone else. The lovers were separated, but they continued to meet in secret. Then Heloise informed Abelard, with exultant joy, that she was pregnant, and he helped her escape from Fulbert's house in the guise of a nun, taking her to Brittany, where she gave birth to a son. The fury of Fulbert fanned into violence, but he found himself helpless. Now faced with Fulbert's anger and a sorrow, Abelard offered to marry Heloise providing their union could be kept a secret. Fulbert promised, would have promised everything, and Abelard sought Heloise to tell her. She with a nobility of spirit and mind which characterized her, refused and backed her refusal with a long discourse compounded of Philosophy and theology—an amazing feat for a girl of less than twenty ! With her

wanted eloquence, supported by no end of learned authority she pleaded with him not to marry her. "What odium the marriage would bring upon the church ! What tears would it cost philosophy ! Think too how deplorable for a man whom Nature had created for the whole world thus to be enslaved by a woman and bound under a dishonourable yoke." This shows how unselfish and pure was Heloise's love and how willing she was to make all kinds of sacrifices. Her love was greater and nobler than that of Abelard. She knew but one love—the love of Abelard, whereas Abelard loved two ; and I fear that for him Ambition was the greater of the two. But Abelard would not hear her reasons, so she came back to Paris, with some foreboding, and married him.

What Heloise had foreseen now occurred. The marriage leaked out, and although Heloise denied her legal status with admirable persistence, the fact could be hidden no longer. Fulbert, furious that his niece so steadfastly denied what he wanted to make known, treated her unkindly so much so that she sought refuge in convent where she had grown into

girlhood and young womanhood. This led the slow-witted Fulbert to suspect that Abelard, who aided in the escape of Heloise to the convent meant to desert her. And so, one night, Fulbert caused Abelard to be attacked in his chambers by a band of ruffians, and they there perpetrated on him the most brutal mutilation. "Morning found Abelard in double pain, pain both physical and mental"—"I thought of the glory which had been lost in a moment, of the just judgment of God that had overtaken, of the treachery for treachery which had been rendered to me by Fulbert, of the triumph that awaited my enemies, of the grief that my parents and friends would feel ;—I thought how the public would be occupied with my infamy how I could appear abroad, when I should be a monstrous spectacle to all, pointed at by every finger, and spoken of by every tongue."

Abelard's only choice now was the life of a monk. But before he took his vows he persuaded Heloise to enter a convent, and lest, even then she might evade eternal vows and enable someone else to enjoy what he could no longer claim, he waited for her to take her vows first. He did

not need to doubt her as later words of hers revealed : "When you were hastening to devote yourself to God, I followed you ; yes, I preceded you. For as if mindful of the wife of Lot, who looked behind her, in the sacred habit and monastic profession, you bound me to God before you bound yourself. In that one instance, I confess, I grieved and blushed for your mistrust of me ; but I, God knows, should not have hesitated to follow you , at your command, if you had been hastening to perdition."

During this time the convent of Heloise was broken up and she found herself without a refuge. Abelard learned of this and turned over to her his oratory at Paraclete, where a new convent grew up and Heloise finally became its abbess. Abelard was forced to flee from Brittany to escape persecutions for his so called heresies. For some years he lived in places unknown. One day sick at heart, and apparently anxious to tell his own truth about himself, Abelard set down to write to an unknown friend, "The story of my calamities". It is a document of the first importance because, being read accidentally by Heloise in her quiet nunnery it prompted

her to write first of her beautiful, heartfelt letter of a series which has since become immortal. She wrote to Abelard—‘her lord, her father, her husband, her brother.’ When the letter reached Abelard, the lover in him was dead. He was now a serious doctor of Divinity, with a strong leaning towards asceticism. “The old, warm-blooded, glorious, angel-eyed dream that Heloise could still write of with stirring bosom, after so many years. was for poor Abelard a folly and a foulness.” To her burning words he answered with dry counsels of perfection in letters which from the human point of view are the most painful things in literature. But on the other hand we rarely meet with such profound and daring utterances of a woman’s heart as those in the letters of Heloise. She bares her heart openly and frankly without any reserve or shame and read in the letters how bravely this twelfth century abbess dared to love.

Abelard’s fate now fast approached. He was condemned by his enemies and was forced to appeal to Rome. On his way to the eternal city to plead his case before the Pope, he broke down in health and died on April 21,



1142. He was buried at first at St. Marcel, but by connivance of a friendly abbot, his dead body was brought in secret to the Paraclete convent and made over to its rightful guardian Heloise. Heloise survived Abelard 21 years and most of that time she must have tenderly watched over his quiet and eternal sleep. When she died she was laid beside him in the same tomb. Their bones have been moved several times, but they survived even the French revolution, and came to rest at last in the famous tomb of Pere-la-Chaise cemetery, in Paris.

In 1766, Marie du Roucy de la Rouchfoucauld the last abbess of Paraclete, caused this epitaph to be engraved on the common tomb of these world renowned lovers :-“Here, under the same stone, repose, of this monastery the founder, Peter Abelard, and the first abbess, Heloise, heretofore in study, genius, love, inauspicious marriage and repentance, now as we hope, in eternal happiness, united. Peter died April 21, 1142. Heloise May 17, 1164.”

Abelard's position and importance in Philosophy particularly in scholasticism, fades beside his fame as the lover of Heloise. He

stands as the dominant figure in that rationalistic movement which began the application of rational expression to the dogmas of the church, and which was to receive the approval of the heads of the church, in principle, two centuries later. But it is with Heloise that his name is inextricably linked in the memories of mankind—and here, in the letters of these two, we are far more interested in their love than in their philosophy. The love of Heloise is obviously greater, more passionate, and more openly expressed than the love of Abelard. The difference in these two has been the cause of dissension from the time in which they lived until today. Each must decide for himself, but a word of warning against judging too harshly the “coolness” of Abelard may be added here : “with Heloise his words are the veil and not the expression of his love.”

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LOVE LETTERS OF  
ABELARD AND HELOISE

*To her lord,-yes, to her father ; to her husband,-yes to her brother ; his servant,-yes, his daughter ; his wife,-yes, his sister.*

HELOISE TO ABELARD.

My Dearest,

The letter that you recently addressed to a friend to console him in his trouble, has by chance fallen into my hands. My knowledge of the writing and my own love for the writer gave me the curiosity to open it. But how dear my curiosity cost me ! What disturbance did it occasion, and how surprised I was to find the whole letter filled with a particular and melancholy account of our misfortunes !

You amply fulfilled the promise made to that friend at the commencement of your letter, that, in comparison with yours, he should regard his misfortunes as nothing, or as of little account. Having exposed the persecutions directed against you by your masters, and the treachery to which you were a victim, you proceeded to a recital of the execrable

envy and the excessive hatred of your disciples.

You did not forget to mention that, by their suggestion, your glorious work on theology was committed to the flames ; that you yourself were condemned, as it were, to a prison. Then follows an account of the machinations of your abbe, and of your false brethren ; an account of the calumnies from which you had most to suffer, of those pseudo-apostles moved against you by envy ; and an account of the scandal every where raised by the name Paraclete, given, contrary to custom, to your oratory ; finally, an account of those insufferable and hitherto unremitted persecutions of your life, by that most cruel tyrant, and those execrable monks, whom you call your children, closes this sad history.

No one, I think, could either read or listen to these things without tears. How must it be, then with me ! Though length of time ought to have closed up my wounds, yet the seeing them described by you was sufficient to make them all open and bleed afresh—surely all the misfortunes of lovers are conveyed to them through the eyes ; upon reading your

letter I feel all mine renewed. Be not then unkind, or deny me I beg of you, that little relief which you only can give. Let me have a faithful account of all that concerns you ; I would know everything, be it ever so unfortunate. Perhaps by mingling my sighs with yours I may make your suffering less, for all sorrows divided are made lighter. Write to me then immediately and I shall know you still remember me. We are all compelled to despair of your life and daily our trembling hearts and agitated bosoms expect, as the last news, the report of your death.

In the name of Christ, who hitherto has protected you for his services, whose humble servants we are, and thine, we beseech you to write us frequently, informing us by what perils you are surrounded ; since we alone remain to you, to participate in your grief or in your joy. Those who condole with us usually afford some consolation to our sorrowing hearts, and a burden laid upon several is more easily borne, or seems more light. If the tempest should subside a little, then hasten your letters, they will afford us not a

little comfort ; they will at least prove that you are mindful of us.

How pleasant the letters of absent friends are, Seneca himself teaches us, by an appropriate example, writing thus in a certain place to his friend Lucilius : "I thank you for writing to me often ; for you show yourself to me in the only way you are able. As soon as I receive your letter we are together." If the pictures of absent friends are pleasant to us, which renew their remembrance, which lighten the pain of absence with a vain phantom of consolation, how much more pleasant are the letters which bring to us the true signs of an absent friend !

Thanks to God, no envy can prohibit, no difficulty can prevent you from giving us your presence in this manner ; let no delay, I beseech you, come from your negligence.

You have written to a friend a long letter of consolation, in view of his misfortunes, it is true, but really touching your own. In narrating these with diligence, for the purpose of consoling him, you have greatly added to our desolation, and while you are desired to heal his wounds, you have inflicted new wounds

of grief upon us, and have deepened those already existing. Cure, I pray you—you who are anxious to cure the wounds which others have made—cure those which you have made yourself. You have calmed the pains of a friend, and a companion, and thus paid the debt due to friendship and intimacy ; but to us, who should be called worshippers, rather than friends, daughters rather than companions, or by another name, if there be one still more sweet and holy,—to us, you are bound by a more sacred obligation.

As to the importance of the debt which obligates you to us, it is necessary to rest upon arguments and testimonies, as though a doubtful thing were to be proved, and if all were silent the facts speak for themselves. You, after God, are the sole founder of this place, the sole constructor of this oratory, the sole builder of this congregation ; you have built nothing here upon a foreign foundation. All that is here is your creation. This solitude, frequented only by wild beasts and robbers, had known no habitation of men, had never possessed a single dwelling. Among the dens of wild beasts, among the retreats of robbers,

where the name of God was never called upon, you erected a divine tabernacle, and dedicated a temple to the Holy Spirit. Nothing for this work did you receive from the riches of kings or princes, although you might have demanded and obtained everything—in order that whatever was done might be attributed to yourself alone. Clerks or scholars, coming in a crowd to listen to your instruction, furnished you with all necessary things ; and those who are living on ecclesiastical benefices who had been accustomed to receive rather than to present offerings, and who previously had possessed hands for taking and not for giving, here became importunate and prodigal in their generosity.

How many and how important treatises, and with what diligence, the Holy fathers have composed, to teach, exhort, or even to console religious women, you, with your abundant knowledge, know better than I with my little store of learning. Therefore, with no ordinary astonishment have I remarked your long oblivion in regard to the tender commencements of our conversion, because, moved neither by reverence for God, nor love for us, nor by the



example of the holy Fathers, you did not try to console me, while fluctuating in my faith, and worn down with unabating grief, either by coming to rejoice my ear with the sound of your voice, or by sending a letter to comfort heart.

You know that your obligations to me were the stronger for our having being united in the sacrament of marriage ; and the immoderate love which, as everyone knows, I have always borned for you, has increased your indebtedness to me.

You know, dearest, all know, how much I lost in losing you. An infamous and hitherto unheard of crime, in depriving you of my love, tore me from myself. Incomparably greater is the grief caused by the manner of the loss, than that caused by the loss itself. The greater the cause of grieving is, so much the greater remedies for the purpose of consolation must be applied. I expect consolation from no other, for you, who alone have caused me to grieve, can alone console me. And you alone are under obligations to comfort me, for so far did I comply with your wishes, that in order not to offend you in anything I

had the courage to destroy myself in obedience to your command. I went even farther, and strange to say, my love for you rose to such a height of delirium that it sacrificed, without hope of regaining it, the sole object of its desire. At your command I changed my habit as well as my inclination, in order to show you that you were the only master of my heart.

God knows I never sought anything in you except yourself ; you, alone, and not your possessions did I desire. Neither the rights of matrimony, nor any dowry have I expected ; neither my own pleasures nor my own wishes, but yours, as you yourself know, have I studied to fulfil.

Although the name of wife seems more holy and more valid, another has always been sweeter to me—that of friend ; or, if you will not be shocked, that of concubine or mistress. The more I humbled myself before you, the more, as I thought, should I elevate myself in your favour, and thus injure the less the glory of our excellence.

I thank you for not having wholly forgotten my sentiments, in this regard, in the letter addressed to your friend for his consolation. You

did not disdain to mention some of the reasons by which I endeavoured to dissuade you from our marriage, from inauspicious nuptials ; but you passed over in silence most of the reasons which caused me to prefer love to marriage, liberty to chains, I call God to witness that if Augustus, supreme master of the world, had offered me the royal honour of his alliance, I should have accepted with more joy and pride the name of your mistress than that of his empress. Neither riches nor power constitute the superiority of man : riches and power are the gifts of fortune, while merit alone establishes the claim of superiority.

The woman who more willingly married a rich than a poor man, and who seeks in a husband possessions rather than himself, surely has a venal soul. Surely to her who is induced to marry from such considerations, a reward rather than love is owed. Certain it is that she is in pursuit of fortune, and not in pursuit of a husband and that, had it been possible, she would have prostituted herself to a richer. We find the clearest proof of this truth in the words of Aspasia, as reported by Æschines, the disciple of Socrates. This feminine

philosopher, wishing to reconcile Xenophon and his wife, ends her exhortations by the reasoning which follows : "As soon as you have realised that there exists not upon earth a better or a more amiable woman, you will know how to recognize and enjoy the good fortune which has happened to you in common—that the husband has the best of women, and the wife best of men".

This sentiment, which seems to be almost the result of inspiration, must be utterance of wisdom herself rather than of Philosophy. It is a divine error, and a happy fallacy in the married, when perfect satisfaction and sympathy protect against any violation the ties of matrimony, not so much by the continence of their bodies as by the chastity of their souls.

But that which error confers upon others, a manifest truth conferred upon me. But those qualities, which none but a wife can discover in her husband, were so conspicuous in you, that the whole world did not so much believe as know that they existed. My love was then so much the true, as it was the farther from resting upon error. For who among kings, who among philosophers, could

equal you in fame ? What country, what city, what village did not ardently desire to see you ? Who, I ask, when you appeared in public did not hasten to look at you, and follow you at your departure with eager eyes ?

But you possessed two things by which you were able to entice the minds of any women—I mean a charming voice in singing, and a fascinating manner in conversation. We know the other philosophers have excelled least of all in these accomplishments. As though it were a pastime, for the purpose of recreation, after a stern labors of philosophy you composed a multitudes of verses and amorous songs, the poetical thoughts and musical graces of which were everywhere responded to ; so that the sweetness of the melody did not permit even the illiterate to be unmindful of you. Especially on this account were women sighing for you in love. And since the greater part of these verses chanted our loves, my name was soon made known in many regions, and many women were inflamed with jealousy against me.

What endowment of mind or body did not adorn your youth ? What women, then envying

me, does not my, misfortune now compel to pity me, when I am deprived of so many pleasures ? What man, or what woman, although at first my enemy, does not due compassion now soften toward me ?

And I am indeed innocent, as you know. Crime is not in the act, but in the intention. Justice does not regard the thing that are done, but the intention with which they are done. What my feelings have always been toward you, you alone, who have proved them, can judge. To your examination I commit all things, upon your testimony I rest my cause.

Tell me one thing, if you are able. Why, since our entrance upon a religious life, which you resolved upon without consulting me, have you so neglected me, so forgotten me, that you have never come to encourage me with your words, nor in your absence have consoled me with a letter ? Tell me, I say, if you are able, or I will say what I think, what indeed all suspect,—that it was desire rather than friendship that drew you to me, passion rather than love. When, therefore, that ceased which was the object of your desire,

everything else which you exhibited on account of it equally vanished.

This conjecture, dearest, is not so much mine as that of all, not so much special as common, not so much mine private as public. Would that it seemed so to me alone, and that your love might find some defenders, by whom my grief might be some what calmed. O that I might be able to imagine reasons for excusing you, and persuading myself that to you I am still an object of interest.

Attend, I pray you, to that which I request, and it will seem small and very easy for you. Since your presence is denied me, give me words of which you possess such an abundance, and thus afford me at least the sweetness of your image. In vain shall I expect to find you bountiful in things, if I find you avaricious in words. Hitherto I have believed that I have merited many things, from you, having complied with everything for your sake, and persevering still in absolute submission to you. When I was in the bloom of youth, it was not religious devotion, but your command, that drew me to the asperity of monastic life. If for this I have merited

nothing in your eyes, how vain has been my labour. No reward for this must be expected by me from God, out of love to whom it is evident that I have as yet done nothing.

When you were hastening to God I followed you, yes I preceded you. For, as if mindful of the wife of Lot, who looked behind her, in the sacred habit and the monastic profession you bound me to God before you bound yourself. In that one instance, I confess, I grieved and blushed for your mistrust of me. But God knows I should not have hesitated to follow you, at your command, if you had been hastening to perdition. For my heart was not with me, but with you. But now, more than ever, if it is not with you it is nowhere, since it cannot exist without you. Deal with it gently, I beseech you. But gently you will have dealt with it, propitious it will have found you, if you return favour for favour, little for much, words for things. O that your love were less sure of me, that it might be more solicitous ! The more secure I have made you, the more have I encouraged your negligence. Re-  
r, I beseech you, what I have done ;



and recollect how much you are indebted to me.

While I was enjoying the delights of love with you, it was regarded by most as uncertain whether I was following the impulse of my heart or the instinct of pleasure. But now the end explains the beginning. I have denied myself all joys that I might be obedient to your wish. I have reserved myself nothing, unless it be the hope that thereby I might become more completely yours. What then must be your iniquity, if, as my sacrifices increase, your gratitude decreases ; if, when I sacrifice everything, you entirely forget your obligations—especially when the demand made is so small, and for you so easy to be complied with.

Therefore, by the God to whom you have consecrated yourself, I beseech you to give me your presence in the manner which is possible to you—that is, by writing to me some consolation. If for no other reason, do it for this end : that, thus reanimated, I may devote myself with more alacrity to the service of God. Formerly, when you sought me for earthly pleasures, you visited me with

frequent letters, and by your frequent songs you placed Heloise in the mouths of all. Every place, every house, resounded with my name. How much more rightly might you now excite me toward God, than you did then toward earthly pleasures. Remember, I beseech you, what you owe to me, consider what I ask ; and I terminate this long letter by a short ending :

Adieu, my only beloved !

## II

*To Heloise, his dearest sister in Christ,  
Abelard, her brother in the same*

Inasmuch as, since our conversion from the world to God, I have not written you, as yet, anything by way of consolation or exhortation, it must not be imputed to my negligence, but to your wisdom, in which I always have the greatest confidence. For I have not believed that she was in need of such aids, to whom Heaven has abundantly distributed its best gifts—who, by words as well as by example, is able to teach the erring, to sustain the weak, to encourage the timid.

You were, long since, accustomed to do these things, when you were only a prioress

under an abbess. If you now bestow the same care upon your daughters that you then bestowed upon your sisters, I believe it is a sufficient reason why I should regard any instruction or exhortation on my part as superfluous. But if it seems otherwise to you in your humility, and you are in need of my direction and teaching in regard to those things that pertain to God, inform me upon what subject you wish me to write, that I may answer you upon that point, as the Lord shall give me ability.

But, thanks to God, who, breathing into your heart solicitude on account of the weighty and imminent perils to which I am exposed, has made you partaker of my affliction ; so that by the intercession of your prayers, the divine compassion may protect me, and shortly put Satan under my feet. Especially for this end, I have hastened to send the form of prayer which you, my sister, once dear to me in the world, now most dear to me in Christ, earnestly solicited from me. By repeating this, you will give to the Lord a sacrifice of prayer, in order to expiate my great and manifold transgressions, and to avert the perils which continually threaten me.

(Abelard goes at some length into the efficiency of prayer, particularly when offered by women for others. He urges upon Heloise and her nuns a prayer for him and for the safety of his soul, which he feels sure cannot be ignored by God. He adds a formula of prayer to be added at the end of the canonical hours.)

If the Lord should deliver me into the hands of my enemies, and they prevailing over me should destroy me, or, by any fortune whatever, should I, absent from you, go the way of all flesh, I beseech you to transfer my body, whether it may have been buried or lie exposed, to your cemetery, where our daughters, yes, our sisters in Christ, more frequently beholding my tomb, may be invited to pour forth their prayers for me to the Lord. I suppose that no place can be safer and more salutary for a contrite and penitent soul, than that which is appropriately consecrated to the true Paraclete—that is, to the Comforter—and is especially adorned with that name. Neither do I believe that there is a more appropriate place for Christian burial, among the faithful, than the cloisters

of women devoted to Christ. It was women who were solicitous concerning the burial of the Lord Christ Jesus, who, both before and after his burial used precious ointments, who faithfully kept watch at the sepulcher, and wept the loss of their spouse. They also were first consoled by the appearance and the words of the angel that announced the resurrection of Christ, and soon after they merited to taste the joys of his resurrection, to see him twice appear, and to touch him with their hands.

Finally, above all things, I ask you, who are now too solicitous on account of the perils to which my body is exposed to be especially solicitous in regard to the safety of my soul, to exhibit to me when I am dead how much you have loved me during my life, by awarding to me the special and particular benefit of your prayers.

Vive, vale, vivantque tuae, valeantque  
sorores,

Vivite, sed Christo, quæso, mei memores.

*To her only one after Christ, his only one in Christ*

TO ABELARD HELOISE.

I am astonished, dearest, that, transcending the custom of epistles, even contrary to the natural course of things, in the address of your letter, you have placed me before yourself;—a woman before a man, a wife before her husband, a handmaid before her lord, a nun before a monk, a deaconess before an abbe. Surely it is the right and becoming order, when we write to superiors or to equals, to place their names before our own. But if we are writing to inferiors, the order of names must follow the order of dignity.

We have also been not a little astonished that you should increase the desolation of those to whom you ought to have offered the remedy of consolation, and that you should excite the tears which you ought to have wiped away. For who of us could read without weeping what you wrote near the end of your letter: “If the Lord should deliver me into the hands for my enemies,

and they, prevailing over me should destroy me, etc., ?" O dearest ! how could your heart conceive such a thing, and how could your lips endure to speak it? Never may the Lord so forget his poor servants as to make them survivors of these ! Never may he grant us a life which would be more insupportable than every species of death ! It belongs to you to celebrate our obsequies to commend our souls to God, and to send before you to him those that you have assembled in his name, that you may no longer be solicitous concerning them, and that you may follow us with the more joy on account of your greater security in regard to our safety.

Spare, I beseech you, my lord, spare such words, by which you make those that are already miserable, most miserable ; and do not rob us before death of that little life which remains to us. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof ; and that day, full of bitterness, will bring anguish enough with it to all whom it shall find. "For why is it necessary," says Seneca, " to anticipate evils, and to lose life before death ?"

You ask, my only one, should any accident

shorten your days, while you are absent from us, that we may cause your body to be removed to our cemetery, in order that you may receive the greater benefit of our prayers, which will be constantly called forth by memory of you. But how, indeed, could you suppose us capable of forgetting you ? But what time will be fit for prayer, when the highest perturbation shall permit no quiet ?—when neither the soul shall retain the sense of reason, nor the tongue the use of speech ?—when the mind insane, thus to speak, toward God himself, having already irritated rather than appeased him, shall not appease him by prayers so much as it shall irritate him by complaints ? Then nothing will remain for us unfortunates but to weep ; it will not be permitted us to pray, and it will be necessary for us to follow rather than to bury ; and we shall be in a condition to be interred instead of being able to inter another. We, who will have lost our life in you, shall in no way be able to live, when you are gone. O that we may not be able to live so long ! The mention of your death is a kind of death to us. But what must be the reality of your death, if it shall



find us still living ? May God never permit that, as your survivors, we may pay the debt to you, or that to you we may leave the patrimony, which from you we expect ! O that, in this, we may precede, and not follow you !

Spare us, then, I beseech you ; spare at least thy only one, by omitting to use such words, which pierce our souls like swords of death more terrible than death itself.

The soul that is overwhelmed with grief is not quiet, neither is the mind that is filled with perturbations open to divine influences. Be unwilling, I beseech you, to hinder us from serving God, to whom you have devoted our lives. It is to be desired that an inevitable event, which, when it comes, brings deep sorrow with it, may come unexpectedly, lest that which no human foresight can turn aside, may torment us long beforehand with useless fear.

But if you were lost, what hope would there be left to me ? or what cause would there be for remaining in this pilgrimage of life, where I have no remedy for its ills but you, and no remedy in you except the fact that you

live ? All other pleasures from you are denied me. Your presence, which could sometimes return me to myself, it is not permitted me to enjoy.

Oh ! if I may say it, Heaven has been cruel to me beyond all conception. O inclement clemency ! O unfortunate fortune ! she has so far consumed her weapons against me, that she has none left for others against whom she rages ! Against me she has exhausted her full quiver<sup>t</sup>, so that others in vain fear her resentment. Neither would she find a place in me for another wound, if she had a single arrow left. Among so many wounds she fears to inflict one more, lest my punishments be ended with death. And although she does not cease to work at my destruction, yet she fears the death which she hastens.

O I am the most miserable of the miserable, the most unhappy of the unhappy ! I was elevated by your love above all woman ; but thrown down thence, my fall in my person and yours has been proportioned to my elevation. The greater the elevation is, the more terrible is the ruin ; Among noble and powerful women, whom has fortune been able to place before me,

or to make equal to me ? Whom has she so cast down and overwhelmed with grief ? What glory did she confer on me in you ! In you what ruin did she bring upon me ! How she has carried to extremes both favour and disgrace, so that she has observed moderation neither in good nor in evil ! She made me beforehand more fortunate than all, in order that she might make me the most miserable of all ; that, when meditating upon the extent of my loss, lamentations might consume me, equal to griefs that had oppressed me ; that a bitterness on account of things lost might succeed, equal to the love of things possessed which had preceded ; and that the joy of the highest pleasure might terminate with the deepest sorrow and pain.

And, in order that more indignation should spring from the injury, all the rights of equity have been violated in regard to us. For while we were enjoying the pleasures of a solicitous love, we were spared the vengeance of heaven. But when we corrected relations unlawful with those lawful, and covered the baseness of fornication with the honour of marriage, the angry hand of the Lord was laid heavily upon

us, and the conjugal couch could not procure pardon for its chaste pleasures from him who had so long tolerated pleasures that were impure.

A man caught in any act of adultery would sufficiently expiate his crime by the punishment which you have endured. What others incur by adultery, you have incurred by the marriage by which you were expecting to make satisfaction for all injuries. What adulterous women bring upon their paramours, your own wife brought upon you. Neither was this when we were wholly abandoned to our earliest pleasures, but when, separated for a time, we were living more chastely; you at Paris presiding over the schools, I at Argenteuil, by your order, in the company of the nuns. This separation should have protected us, for we had imposed it on ourselves; you, in order to devote myself more freely to prayer or meditation of Holy Scripture; and while we were living so much the more holy as we were the more chaste, you alone expiated with your blood the crime which was common to us both. You alone bore the punishment; both were in fault; you were the least culpable, and you bore all the pain.

In lowering yourself, and elevating me and all of my family to the honour of your alliance, you rendered sufficient satisfaction to God and men, not to deserve the chastisement which those traitors inflicted upon you. O how unfortunate I am, that I should have been born to be the cause of so great a crime ! O fatal sex ! It will always be the destruction of the greatest men ! Hence it is written in Proverbs, concerning the shunning of women ; “Hearken unto me, therefore, O ye children, and attend to the words of my mouth. Let not thine heart incline to her ways, go not astray in her paths. For she hath cast down many wounded ; yea, many strong men have been slain by her—Her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death.” And in Ecclesiastes : “And I find more bitter than death the woman whose heart is snares and nets, and her hands as bands : whose pleaseth God shall escape from her, but the sinner shall be taken by her.”

(Heloise cites Eve’s seduction of Adam, and others, to carry her point.)

The subtle temper knew well, for he had often proved it, that easiest ruin for men is

found in their wives. Extending his ordinary malice to us, you, whom he had not been able to destroy by fornication, he tried with marriage ; he found in good the instrument of destruction which he had not been able to find in evil.

I thank God for one thing at least—that I do not at all resemble the women I have cited ; that the tempter has not made me consent to the fault, for the commission of which, nevertheless, I was made the cause. Although I am justified by the purity of my intentions, I have in no way incurred the penalty of consenting to this crime ; nevertheless I have committed many sins which do not allow me to believe myself entirely innocent of it. In as much as I served the pleasures of carnal delights, I therefore have deserved what I now suffer, and the consequences of my previous sins have justly become punishments.

O that I could do penance worthy of this crime, that the length of my expiation might in some sort balance the pains of your punishment ; and that what you have suffered for a moment in body I might suffer during my

whole life in contrition of mind. and that this might satisfy you at least, if not God !

To confess to you the infirmity of my most wretched mind, I find no penance with which I am able to appease God, whom I am always accusing of the greatest cruelty, on account of this injury ; and, opposed to his dispensation, I offend him more with my indignation, than I appease him with the satisfaction of my penance. It cannot be said that penance has been made for him, however great may be the bodily affliction, if the mind still retains a willingness to sin, and is still swayed by its primitive desires. It is easy to confess our faults, to accuse ourselves of them, or even to afflict our bodies with external pains. It is extremely difficult to tear the mind away from the desires of the highest pleasures. This is the reason why Job, after having said, "Therefore I will not refrain my mouth,"—that is, I will loose my tongue, and open my mouth in confession, that it may accuse me of my sins, immediately added : "I will speak in the anguish of my spirit." Gregory, in an exposition of this passage, says : "There are some who confess faults with an open mouth, but they know not how to confess

with contrite hearts, and rejoice while saying things to be bewailed." It is not sufficient to avow our faults, it is necessary to avow them in bitterness of soul, in order that this very bitterness may punish us for whatever the tongue accuses us, through the judgment of the mind.

But this bitterness of true repentance is very rare, as St. Ambrose has remarked : "I have found more who have preserved innocence, than who have truly repented". But those pleasures of love, which we enjoyed together, were so sweet to me, that they can neither displease me, nor glide from my memory. Wherever I go, they present themselves to my eyes, with all their allurements. Neither are their illusions wanting to me in my dreams.

During the solemnity of divine service, when prayer ought to be the more pure, the enticing phantoms of those pleasures so take possession of my most miserable soul that I am occupied with those base delights, rather than with my prayer. When I ought to be grieving for the commission of sins, I am rather sighing for the return of pleasures that are lost. Not only the things which we did,



but the times in which we did them, have been with your image so fixed in my mind, that during my waking hours all is lived over again in imagination, and in my dreams all the past returns. Sometimes, the cogitations of my mind are manifested in my motions and expressions, and words escape me which betray the irregularity of my thoughts.

O truly miserable I am, and most worthy of that complaining of a grieving soul! "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" And would that I could truly add what follows: "I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord".

This grace, dearest, has come to you, and a single corporal plague has protected you against many plagues of soul, and God is found to be the most propitious in that wherein he is believed to be most adverse to you. He is like a physician, who does not spare pain, provided he can save the life of his patient.

I am called chaste, because it has not been perceived that I am a hypocrite. Purity of the flesh is taken for virtue, as though virtue belonged to the body instead of the soul. I

am praised by men, but I have no merit with God, who proves the heart and reins and sees in secret.

I am praised for being religious in these times, when there is only a small part of religion that is not hypocrisy; when he is most extolled who does not offend the judgment of man. Doubtless it is in some manner laudable, and in some manner appears acceptable to God, not to scandalize the church by the bad example of an outward act, whatever the motive may be; for thus we do not give infidels an occasion of blaspheming the name of the Lord, and carnal men an occasion of defaming the order to which we belong. And this, too, is a gift of divine grace which gives not only the power to do good, but also the power to abstain from evil. But the latter precedes in vain, when the former does not succeed, as it is written : "Abhor that which is evil, cleave to that which is good." And in vain is either done, if it is not done through the love of God.

But in every stage of my life, God knows that I have feared to offend you than to offend him,—that I have sought more to please you

than to please him. Thy command, and not the love of God, led me to assume religious habit. See how unhappy a life is mine—a life more wretched than all others—if here I endure so many things in vain, without the expectation of any reward in the future. Thus far my simulation has deceived you, as well as others you have regarded that as religion which was nothing but hypocrisy—so commending yourself to my prayers, you ask from me what I expect from you.

Do not, I beseech you, put so much confidence in me, lest you should cease to succor me with your prayers. Do not suppose me well, lest you should deprive me of the pleasure of a remedy. Do not believe that I am not needy, lest you should defer to aid me in my necessity. Do not suppose me strong, lest I should fall ere you can sustain me. Many have been injured by Flattery, and the support which they need she has taken away. Through the prophet Isaiah, the Lord exclaims: “O my people, they which lead thee cause thee to err; and destroy the way of thy paths.” And through the mouth of the prophet Ezekiel: “Woe to the

women that sew pillows to all armholes, and make kerchiefs upon the head of every statue, to hunt souls". On the other hand, it is said by Solomon : "The words of the wise are as goads, and as nails fastened by masters of assemblies, which are given from one shepherd".

Dearest, I beseech you, from praising me, lest you incur the known baseness of adulation, and the crime of mendacity ; or, if you believe there is any good in me, do not praise me, lest the praise itself vanish in the breath of vanity. No skillful physician judges of an interior disease by an inspection of external appearances. Nothing that is common to reprobates and the elect, obtains any merit with God. The really just often neglect those external practices that strike the attention of all, whilst no one conforms to them with greater ease than the hypocrites.

The heart of man is corrupt and ever inscrutable. Who can understand it ? There are ways which seems right to men, but their issues lead to death. The judgment of men is rash in those things which are reserved solely for the examination of God. Hence it is written "Praise no man during his lifetime". For, in praising

a man, we are liable to destroy the virtue itself which makes him worthy of praise.

But your praise is so much the more perilous to me, as it is more grateful; and I am so much the more studious to please you in all things. Distrust me, I beseech you, instead of confiding in me, that I may always be assisted with your solicitude. The danger is greater now than ever, for there is remaining in you no remedy for my incontinence.

Do not exhort me to virtue, do not provoke me to combat, in saying, "Virtue is perfected by trial"; and, "He only shall be crowned, who shall have strived to the last." I do not seek the crown of victory. It is enough for me to shun peril. It is safer to shun peril than to wage war. In whatever corner of heaven God may place me, it will satisfy me. No one will there envy another, since for each one what he obtains will be sufficient.

My position in this respect is fortified by authority. Let us hear St. Jerome: "I confess my weakness; I am unwilling to contend in hope of victory, lest in some way I may lose victory." Why should we abandon the certain, and contend for the uncertain?

*To the Spouse of Christ, the Servant of the same.*

TO HELOISE ABELARD.

Your last letter, I remember, is summed up in four points, into which you have disposed the vivid expression of your complaints. At first, indeed, you complain that, contrary to the custom in letters, even contrary to the natural order of things, my letter directed to you placed you before me in the salutation. In the second place, you complain that I increased your desolation, when I ought to have offered consolation, and that I excited the tears which it was my due duty to wipe away, by saying : "If the Lord should deliver me into the hands of my enemies, and they prevailing over me should put me to death," etc. In the third place, comes up again that old and perpetual complaint of yours against Providence, about the mode of our conversion to God, and the cruelty of the treachery practised against me. Finally you accuse yourself, in opposition to my praise, and earnestly supplicate me to address you no more in that manner.

I have determined to answer objections

singly, not so much for my own justification as for your instruction and encouragement ; that you may assent to my commands the more freely, when you shall learn that they are reasonable ; that you may listen so much the more attentively in regard to things which pertain to you, as you shall find me the less reprehensible in regard to things which pertain to myself ; and that you may fear so much the more to condemn me, as you shall find me the less worthy of reprehension.

In regard to the preposterous order of my salutation, as you call it, you will recognize, by giving diligent attention to it, that I have acted in accordance with your own sentiment. For, what all can see, you have yourself said that when we write to superiors their names must come first. You know that you became my superior, and that you began to be my mistress from the time when you were made the spouse of my master, according to the words of St. Jerome writing to Eustochia : This is the reason why I write, my mistress Eustochia. Surely I ought to call the spouse of my master my mistress." It is a happy nuptial exchange that you at first the

wife of a wretched human creature, should be elevated to the couch of the highest king. Neither is the privilege of this honour extended to your former husband alone, but to all other servants of the same king. Be not astonished, therefore, if I commend myself to you as, living or dead, the subject of your prayers ; for it is everywhere admitted that the intercession of a spouse with her lord is more powerful than that of a servant, and that the voice of a mistress has more authority than that of a slave.

As to the pain which I have given you by mentioning the danger which threatens me, and the death which I fear, I have in that only answered your demand, ever your prayer. The following are the very words of the first letter which you sent :—

“In the name of Christ, who hitherto has protected you for his service, whose humble servants we are and thine, we beseech you to write us frequently, informing us by what perils you are surrounded ; since we alone remain to you, to participate in your grief or your joy. Those who condole with us usually afford some consolation to the sorrowing, and a burden laid upon



several is more easily borne, or seems more light”.

Why then do you reproach me for having made you participate in my anxiety, when you have compelled me to do it by your supplications? In view of this desperate life which, with torture, I am living, does it become you to rejoice? Do you wish to participate in my joy only, and not in my grief? Do you wish to rejoice with the rejoicing, and not to weep with the weeping? There is no greater difference between true and false friends than this—that the former are faithful in adversity, while the latter remain only so long as prosperity lasts. Leave off your reproaches, then, I beseech you, and suppress these complaints that are wholly foreign to the heart of charity.

O if you are still pained in this respect, you must consider that, placed in such imminent peril, and in daily despair of my life, it behoves me to be solicitous in regard to the safety of my soul, and to provide for it, while it is still permitted. If you love me truly, you will not complain of this precaution. And if you have any hope of divine mercy toward

me, you should even desire that I may be freed from the miseries of this life, which, as you see, are insupportable. You know well, that whosoever should free me from this life would put an end to my torments. What pains may await me hereafter is uncertain, but from how great pains I should be delivered is certain.

The end of a wretched life is always sweet, and these who suffer with others in their misfortunes, and condole with them in their sorrow desire that these misfortunes and sorrows may be terminated,—even to their own hurt, if they sincerely love those whom they see in trouble and they are not mindful of an event that brings grief to themselves if it brings deliverance to their friends, So a mother who sees her child wasting away with a painful and incurable disease, desires that death may come to terminate the suffering which she cannot bear to look upon, and prefers that it should die rather than be the companion of misery. And whoever is greatly delighted with the presence of a friend, nevertheless rather wishes that he should be absent and happy, than present and miserable,

for, not being able to remedy his pains, he cannot bear the sight of them.

It is not permitted you to enjoy my presence, even in misery. And when my presence would be useless to you for any purpose of pleasure, I do not see why you should prefer for me a most miserable life to a happier death. If you desire that my miseries should be prolonged for your own interest, you are evidently my enemy rather than my friend. If you shrink from seeming to be my enemy, I pray you, as I have already said, desist from your complaints.

But approve the praise which you reprobate; for in this very thing you show yourself more worthy of it; for it is written: "He that shall humble himself, shall be exalted." And Heaven grant that your thought may accord with what you have written. If such were your real sentiments, your humility is true, and will not vanish before my words. But take care, I beseech you, that you do not reprobate that with your lips which in heart you desire. In this regard, St. Jerome writes thus to the virgin Eustochia: "We yield ourselves freely to our adulators, and

although we reply that we are undeserving, and blush, nevertheless the soul within rejoices in praise." Such a one Virgil describes in the lascivious Galathea, who sought the pleasure that she desired by appearing to fly, and incited her lover the more toward herself by feigning a repulse: *Et. fugit ad salices, et se crepit ante videri*. Flying, she desires to be seen before she conceals herself for by this flight she is the more sure of obtaining the caresses of the youth, which she seems to shun. So when we appear to shun the praise of men, we provoke it the more and when we pretend to wish to conceal ourselves that no one may see in us anything to praise, we excite the more the praises of those who are not wary, for thereby we seem the worthy of praise.

And these things I speak because they frequently happen, not because I suspect any such thing in you, for I do not doubt your humility; but I wish to have you shun even these words, lest you may seem to those who do not know you to seek glory, as St. Jerome says, by shunning it. Never will my praise inflate you, but will always incite

you to better things, and your zeal for the attainment of the virtues for which I praise you will be earnest in proportion to your desire of pleasing me. My praise is not to you a testimony of religion, that you should thereby be inspired with pride. No one must be judged by the panegyrics of friends, nor by the vituperations of enemies.

Finally, it remains to speak to you of your old and perpetual complaint, of your presuming to accuse God on account of the mode of our conversion, instead of wishing to glorify him, as it is just. I believed that the bitterness of your soul had vanished, on account of the striking proofs of the divine mercy toward us. The more dangerous this is to you—it consumes the body as well as the soul—the more it excites my pity and my regret. If, as you profess you study above all things to please me, then, that you may not torture me, that you may please me supremely, reject that bitterness from your heart. With this you cannot please me, nor can you with me arrive at beatitude. Could you bear that I should go thither without you—you who profess your willingness to follow

me even to perdition ? But seek religion for this one thing at least, that you may not be separated from me when, as you believe I am hastening to God ; and that you may seek it the more earnestly, call to mind how blessed it will be for us to set out together, and how much the sweetness of our companionship will add to our felicity. Think of what you have said ; remember what you written—that in the meaning of our conversion God has showed himself, as it is manifest, so much the more propitious to me, as he is believed to have been the more averse. But in this his holy will is pleasing to me, because it is to me most salutary and to you as well as to me, if the excess of your grief admit a reasonable judgment. Do not complain that you are the cause of so great a good, nor doubt that God predestined you to be the source of it. Weep not on account of my sufferings for it would also be necessary for you to weep on account of the sufferings of the martyrs and the death of the Lord. Could you more easily bear what has happened to me, and would it offend you less, if it had justly happened to me ? No, surely, for then it would be the more

ignominious for me, and the more glorious for my enemies, since justice would procure praise for them, and my fault contempt for me. No one would then accuse them for their act ; no one would be moved with pity for me.

But, to assuage the bitterness of your grief, I could show the justice as well as the utility of what has happened to us, and I could show you that God was more right in punishing us after marriage than when we were living an irregular life.

You also know that, when I transferred you into my native country, you were clothed in the sacred habit, that you pretended to be a nun, and by such a pretense profaned the sacred institution to which you now belong. Judge thence how properly the divine justice, or rather the divine grace, has drawn you in spite of yourself into the religious state of which you did not fear to make a jest, it has imposed on you as a punishment that very habit which you daringly assumed, in order that the falsehood of pretending to be a nun might be remedied by the truth of being a nun in reality.

Think and reflect upon the dangers which surrounded us, and whence the Lord snatched

us ; and unceasingly with hymns of gratitude recount how much the Lord has done for our souls ; and console by our example the transgressors who despair of his mercy, showing all what can be done by penitence and prayer, when so many benefits have been conferred on the impenitent and the hardened. Observe the most exalted counsel of the Lord in regard to us, and how he tempered his justice with mercy ; how prudently he made use of evils, and divinely overcame impiety, for, by the just infliction of a bodily punishment upon me, he saved two souls. Compare our danger and the manner of our deliverance, the disease and the remedy. Behold the cause of so much indulgence, and admire the pity and the love of God.

I merit death, and God gives me life. I am called, and I resist. I persist in my crimes, and unwillingly am driven to pardon. The Apostle prays, and is not heard ; he persists in prayer, and does not prevail. Truly the Lord is solicitous concerning me. I will go therefore and proclaim how much the Lord has done for my soul.

Come and join me ; be my inseparable



companion in one act of grace, since you have participated with me in the fault and in the pardon. For the Lord is not unmindful of your safety ; yes, he is most especially mindful of you, for he has clearly foreordained that you should be his by a certain divine presage, since he designated you as Heloise from his own name, which is Elohim.

He, I say, has mercifully ordered that by one of us both should be saved, when the devil was trying to destroy us both by one. A little while before the catastrophe, the indissoluble law of the nuptial sacrament had bound us together, and while I desired to retain you always to myself,—you loved me beyond measure,—the Lord was preparing the circumstances which should turn our thoughts toward Heaven.

For if we had not been married, my retreat from the world, or the counsel of your relatives, or the attraction of pleasure, would have retained you in the world. Behold how much the Lord has been mindful of us, as if he had reserved us for some great purpose, as if he had been indignant or grieved that those talents for science and literature, which he had

entrusted to us both, were not used exclusively for the honour of his name ; or as if he were in fear in regard to his most unfaithful servant, as it is written : “Women cause even the wise to apostatize”. Of this Solomon, the wisest of men, is a proof.

Your talent of prudence indeed brings daily increase to the Lord; already to the Lord you have given many spiritual daughters, whilst I have remained fruitless, and have laboured in vain among the children of perdition. O what a terrible misfortune ! What a lamentable loss, if given up to the impurities of carnal pleasure, you should bear with grief a small number of children for the world, instead of bearing with joy so great a number for heaven. You would be nothing more than a woman,—you who now transcend even men, and who have exchanged the malediction of Eve for the benediction of Mary. What profanation if those sacred hands, which now are employed in turning the holy page, were condemned to the vulgar cares which are the lot of women !

Be no longer afflicted, then, my dear sister; I beseech you ; cease to accuse a father who

corrects us so tenderly ; attend rather to what is written : “Whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth”. And in another place : “He that spareth his rod hateth his son.” This is transitory not eternal ; it purifies us, and does not destroy.

Are you not moved to tears and bitter compassion, when you behold the only Son of God seized by the most impious, dragged away, mocked, scourged, buffeted, spit upon, crowned with thorns, hung upon the infamous cross between two thieves, finally in such a horrible and execrable manner suffering death, for your salvation and that of the world ? Him, my sister, who is thy spouse and the spouse of the whole church, keep continually before your eyes, and in your heart.

Gaze upon him as he goes to his crucifixion, bearing his own cross. Be one of the multitude, one of the women, who were beating their breasts and weeping, as St. Luke narrates in these words : “And there followed him a great company of people, and of women, which also bewailed and lamented him.” He turned toward them with benignity, and mildly predicted to them the vengeance that should

follow his death, and taught them how to guard themselves against it. "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and your children; for behold the days are coming in which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bore, and the paps which never gave suck. Then they shall begin to say to the mountains: Fall on us; and to the hills: Cover us; for if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?"

Sympathize with him who freely suffers for your redemption, and participate with him in the pains of the cross which he bears for you. Approach in spirit his sepulcher, weep and mourn with the holy women, who, as I have already said, were sitting at the sepulcher, weeping their Lord. Prepare with them perfumes for his burial, but let them be better, let them be spiritual, instead of material; for such he requires of you, since he was not able to receive them from the others. Suffer for him then, with all the ardor of your devotion, with all the strength of your love.

Such, my sister, be your affliction, such

be your grief for the death of that spouse, to an alliance with whom you have been fortunately elevated. He has purchased you, not with his possession but with himself. With his own blood he has bought you and redeemed you. Behold how much right he has to you, and how precious you are in his sight.

You are more than heaven, more than earth, since the Creator of the world has given himself for your ransom. But what mysterious treasure has he, then, discovered in you—he to whom nothing is necessary—if, in order to possess you, he has consented to all the tortures of his agony, to all opprobrium of his punishment? What has he sought in you, if not yourself? Behold your true lover, who desires only you, and not what belongs to you. Behold your true friend, who said in dying for you “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friend.” It was he, and not I, who truly loved you. My love, which drew us both into sin, was only desire—it does not merit the name of love. I have, you say, suffered for you, and perhaps it is true; but I have rather suffered by youm and even against my will;

not for the love of you, but by the violence that was done me ; not for your safety, but, for your despair. On the contrary, Christ willingly, and for your salvation, suffered for you, and by his suffering he cures all languor, removes all passion. Toward him, then, and not toward me, be directed all your devotion, all your compassion. Grieve on account of the injustice and cruelty that befall the innocent ; and not that a just vengeance fell on me, for it is rather a favor for which we should both thank Heaven.

You are unjust, if you do not love justice ; and great is your sin, if you voluntarily oppose the divine will and reject the gifts of grace. Bewail your Redeemer, and not him who ruined you,—the Lord who died for you, and not the servant who still lives, and who has just been truly delivered from death.

Submit, my sister, submit, I beseech you, with patience to the trials which have mercifully befallen us. It is the rod of a Father, and not the sword of a persecutor. The father strikes to correct, lest the enemy should strike to kill. He wounds to prevent death, and not to cause it. He wounds the body and

cures the soul. He ought to have put to death, and he gives life. He arrests the malady, and makes the body sound. He punishes once, not to punish forever. By the wound which has caused one to suffer, he saves two from death. Two sin ; one is punished.

I complain the less that my merit should be decreased, while I am certain that yours is increasing. We are indeed one in Christ, one by the bond of marriage. Whatever pertains to you, I do not regard as foreign to myself ; but Christ is yours, because you have been made his spouse. And now, as I mentioned above, you hold me as a servant, whom formerly you acknowledged as your Lord ; but a servant joined to you by spiritual love, rather than subjected to you by fear. Hence, my confidence in your intercession is great ; I can obtain that by your prayer, which I cannot obtain by my own ; especially at this time when a multitude of cares and imminent dangers distract my mind, and allow me quiet moments for prayers.

That nothing may impede my request, or hinder it from being fulfilled, I hasten to

send you a prayer which I have composed, which with uplifted hands you will offer to Heaven for us both.

Farewell in Christ, spouse of Christ ; in Christ ; in Christ farewell, and in Christ live. Amin.

## V

### *To Her Master, His Servant.*

That you may have no reason for accusing me of disobedience, I shall check, as you have commanded, the language of immoderate grief. I will try to suppress, at least in writing to you, those expressions of weakness and sorrow against which it is so difficult, or rather impossible, to fortify myself in an interview. For nothing is less in our power than the mind, and this we are rather compelled to obey, than able to command. When we are under the influence of strong emotions, we cannot so effectually repress them, that they may not be exhibited in action, and manifest themselves in words, which are the ready signs of the soul's passions. As it is written : "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh". Therefore, I shall not allow my hand to write those things which I



could not prohibit my tongue from speaking. O that my heart were as able to command its grief, as my hand is to command its writing !

Some solace you are able to confer, although you cannot wholly cure my grief. One thought drives out another, and the mind, when new objects engage the attention, is forced to abandon or to suspend its haunting memories. A thought has so much the more power to occupy the mind, and turn it aside from other things, as its object is more honourable, and seems to us more essential.

We supplicate you, therefore, all of us, the servants of Christ, and your children in Christ,—we supplicate you to accord to us, in your paternal goodness, two things, which seem to us absolutely necessary : First, to teach us the origin of the female monastic institution, the rank and authority of our profession ; Second, to frame and send to us a rule, appropriate to our sex.—

\* \* \* \*

Here it is best to stop. In the words of O. W. Wright : “Heloise is here leaving herself, and nothing can tempt us to follow her.

She discourses with great learning about something foreign to her own heart ; but, as dearly as we love her, we shall not allow her, at the command of Abelard, to fling monastic dust in our eyes. Her warm, love-laden heart is beating thick and fast ; her soul-lit eyes are swimming in tears ;—her spirit does not obey, if her hand does ;—we will look at her, and not at the pale dead words that she writes.” Abelard’s reply to this letter is a treatise on monastic institutions.

Perhaps the words of Alexander Pope, from his (*Eloisa to Abelard*,) provide fitting conclusion to these letters :

Yet here forever, ever must I stay ;  
 Sad proof how well a lover can obey !  
 Death, only death, can break the lasting chain,  
 And here, e’en then, shall my cold dust remain,  
 Here all its frallties, all its flames resign,  
 And wait till ’tis no sin to mix with thime.

\* \* \* \* \*

## LOVE LETTERS OF A PORTUGUESE NUN.

### INTRODUCTION

The following letters have obtained the title of Portuguese, from their having been written in that language, by a nun or canoness of Lisbon.

About the year 1663, Noel Bouton de Chamilly, of a noble and distinguished family of Burgundy, who later on became Marshal of France, became enamoured of Marianne, a young Portuguese nun or canoness, in whom he excited a passion still more, violent than what he felt himself.

We are indebted for these letters to the passion with which Chamilly inspired the tender Marianne during his stay in Portugal ; a passion which his return to France rendered still more violent : her grief for his absence being inconsolable, she sought relief in writing to him. Chamilly, remaining in France, had the foolish vanity to show these letters to his friends, and it is to this very folly that we are indebted for this passion of them.

The nun herself appears from her own account, to have been born in the middling rank of society, but her letters bear the stamp of a most generous and exalted mind : they may be ranked with those of Heloise to Abelard, to which though posterior in point of time, they are not inferior in merit.

Truth in all its nakedness is beautiful, falsehood with all its draperies is ugly. Such was the faith of the writer of these letters. She hated nothing more than deception and dissimulation. In one of her letters she says : “I fear studied actions much more than coldness of temperament. Shall I tell you the whole of my fancies on the subject ? It was the excess of your transports yesterday which gave birth to my suspicions. You seemed out of yourself, and through all that you appeared to be, I sought your real self. O heavens ! what would have become of me, had I found you guilty of dissimulation ? I prefer your love to my fortune, to my glory, to my life, but I could more easily support the certainty of your hatred, than the deceitful semblance of your love. It is not to the exterior that I look, but to the feelings of the soul. Be cold,

be negligent, be even fickle, if you can be so, but never dissimulate. Deception is the greatest crime that can be committed against love ; and I would much sooner pardon you for infidelity, than for using art to conceal it from my knowledge."

For him love was a mere pastime ; but with her it was life itself. She depicts her sincerety thus :—

"Yes, I see now the treachery of your whole conduct. You deceived me every time you said you delighted to be alone with me. To my importunate fondness only I have owed your transports and your seeming warmth. You deliberately laid a plan to ensnare me ; you considered my passion as a triumph for yourself, but never did it deeply touch your heart. . . . . I am irritated with myself when I reflect on all that I have sacrificed to you. I have lost my reputation, I have exposed myself to the fury of my relations, to the severity of our laws against offending nuns, and to your ingratitude, which, of all these misfortunes, appears to be the greatest." She promises to love him all her life, even to adoration. "Love must reign over every faculty

of our souls. We must be entirely at his disposal, and if love be satisfied, I care not that reason is displeased." In his dealings with Marianne he probably acted on the maxim, "All is fair in love and war." But deception or its like may be fair in war but it is very unfair in love, "For love is a plant whose roots grow in the very substance of the heart, and to tear out a living love, we must tear out the heart itself."

The fate of the unfortunate Marianne has never been known; those who can feel for sensibility, and the tender devotion of love, will hope that time wore from her heart the image of her unworthy lover, and that in the repose of her convent she regained her tranquillity; but alas! this is scarcely to be hoped; it is more probable that the unhappy passion in which, her very existence seemed to be involved, soon broke a heart, too tender and impassioned to survive the apathy of despair.

"These letters will excite those delicious tears which relieve the heart, not that agony of grief which oppresses it; they breathe the most tender, the most impassioned, the most

generous love ; they paint the passion in all its nice gradations of shade, and all its interesting details : you behold its storms, its agitations, its momentary resolutions, its fond relapses, the delicacy of its fears, and the heroism of its sacrifices.

“In short, the Portugese letters, display, with a most accurate delicacy and truth, the heart of a woman deeply impressed with love ; her soul now intoxicated with bliss, now overwhelmed with sorrow ; and after describing all her emotions with the naivette of genuine feeling, and the glowing warmth of passion. The fair who have loved will find in them what they have thought and felt a thousand times, when they have been writing to their lovers ; and lovers at least those who have been fortunate enough to inspire a delicate passion, will think, in reading them, that they are re-perusing the letters of their mistresses.”

Such are the Letters, of which a translation is now offered to the English reader.

### LETTER 1

It is possible, then, that you can for an instant have been angry with me, and that I,

with a passion the most delicate that ever was felt, can have given you cause for a moment's vexation ! Alas ! What remorse must be mine had I been wanting in the fidelity that is due to you, since, while I can only be accused of an excess of tenderness, I yet condemn myself as the cause of your anger. But wherefore should it occasion this remorse ? Have I not had reason to complain ? And should I not alarm your affection, could I without murmuring endure your reserve ? Oh my God ! I am continually reproaching my own soul that does not sufficiently discover to you the ardour of its emotions, and still you wish to conceal from me every secret of yours.

When my looks have too much softness they obey but the tenderness of my heart, and are unfaithful to its ardour. If they are too antimated, my tenderness is equally dissatisfied. The most expressive actions seem to me inadequate to speak of my fondness, yet you can be reserved with me, even about trifles. How does this conduct pain me ! and how would you pity me could you know to what thoughts it has given rise ! But why am I thus curious ?



Why do I wish to search into the recesses of your soul where I should find but indifference, and perhaps infidelity ? It is kindness that renders you so reserved, and I am under an obligation to you for your mysterious conduct. You wish to spare me the misery of knowing all your indifference, and you dissemble your sentiments only from pity to my weakness.

Alas !. why did you not appear thus to me in the beginning of your acquaintance ! My heart might then, perhaps have regulated itself by yours. But it was not till you found that I loved with so much ardour that you resolved to love with so little. Moderation, however, is not the characteristic of your nature. You are impetuous. I experienced it no longer ago than yesterday. But, alas ! your impetuosity owes its birth to rage alone, and you feel only when you suppose that an insult is offered. Ungrateful man ! what has love done that it shares so small a portion of your heart ? Why is not your warmth of soul manifested to answer mine ? and why is not this precipitancy employed to hasten the moments of our bliss ? Who that saw your readiness to quit my apartment when anger drove you

thence, would believe you so slow to return when invited by love? But I deserve this treatment for venturing to command you. Is it for a heart so entirely your own to pretend to give you laws! You were in the right to punish it, and I ought to die with shame for having believed myself the mistress of my conduct. Too well you know how to punish this rebellion! Do you remember with what apparent tranquility you yesterday evening offered to aid my design of seeing you no more? Did your heart really sanction this offer, or rather did you think me capable of accepting it? For, such is the delicacy of my love, that it would be mere grievous to me to be suspected of a crime than to see it committed by you.

I am more jealous of what is due to my affection than to yours, and I could more easily pardon you for being unfaithful, than for suspecting me of infidelity. Yes, it is with myself I wish to be satisfied rather than with you. My tenderness is so exalted, and my, esteem for you makes me so glory in it, that allowing you to doubt it appears to me the greatest of crimes. But how could you doubt

it ? Every thing proves it to you ; and in your heart, as in mine, there is not a single emotion that does not tell you that you are loved to adoration. Love has so well taught me that, even to the moderation of my caresses, there is nothing that does not convince you of the excess of my passion. Have you never observed this effect of my compliance with your wishes ? How many times have I restrained the transport of my joy on your arrival, because your eyes seemed to say that you wished me to act with more circumspection. You have done me a great injustice if you did not observe my constraint on these occasions ; for such sacrifices are the most painful that I ever made you ; but I do not reproach you with them. Wherefore should I care to be perfectly happy, if what is wanting to my felicity serves to increase yours ? Did you show more warmth I should have the pleasure of believing myself more beloved, but you would not have that of believing yourself so much. You would think that my fondness was owing to your attachment ; but now I have the glory of thinking that you owe it to my inclination only. Yet abuse not this affectionate generosity, nor

presume upon it so far as to withhold the little show of love that still remains ; rather be generous in your turn. Come to me and protest that the disinterestedness of my tenderness increases your own, that when I believe all put to the hazard, I in reality hazard nothing, and that you are as tender and as faithful as I am tenderly and faithfully yours.

## LETTER II.

It is certainly no violation of truth to say that the lady whom we saw yesterday evening is very ugly ; she dances vulgarly, and the Count de Cugne was much mistaken when he described her as a fine woman. How could you remain so long beside her ? From the expression of her countenance, it appeared to me that what she said was by no means witty. Yet you conversed with her the greatest part of the evening, and had cruelty enough to tell me that you were not displeased with the conversation. What then did she say to you that was so charming ? Did she tell you news of some French lady who is dear to you, or did she herself begin to grow dear ; for love alone could make so long a conversation bearable.

I did not find your newly arrived Frenchmen so agreeable ; I was annoyed by them the whole evening ; they said the wittiest things they could imagine to me, and I plainly saw that they studied to do so, but they afforded me no amusement, and I believe it was their conversation that gave me the dreadful headache which I have had all night. You would know nothing of this were I not to tell you. Your servants are no doubt occupied in inquiring how that happy French woman bear her evening's fatigue, for you really made her dance enough to occasion illness. But what is there so charming in her ? Do you think her more affectionate or more faithful than any other ? Did you find in her a disposition more favourable to you than that which I have shown. No ! Assuredly that cannot be ! You well know that only once seeing you pass by, the repose of my life was lost, and that, without any consideration either of my sex or birth, I was the first to seek opportunities of seeing you again. If she has done more than this, she waits your getting up this morning, and little Durino will doubtless find her seated by your pillow. I wish for your felicity it may

be so. So dear to me in your happiness, that till my last hour I would readily consent to increase it at the expense of my own ; and if you wish to regale the charmer with the perusal of this letter, do it without hesitation. What I write to you may not be useless to the advancement of your wishes. I rank high in the kingdom ; I have always been flattered as possessing some share of beauty; and I believed it till your contempt undeceived me. Propose me then as an example to your new conquest. Tell her that I love you even to madness ; I am willing to acknowledge it, and would rather bring ruin upon me by the avowal, than deny a passion so dear to me. Yes, I love you a thousand times better than myself.—At the moment I am writing to you I am jealous, I own it ! Your conduct yesterday has filled my heart with rage, and, since I must tell you everything, I believe you are unfaithful. Yet in spite of all this I love you more than woman ever loved. I hate the Marchioness de Furtado for having afforded you the opportunity of seeing this newcomer. I wish the Marchioness de Castro had never been born, since it was at her nuptials you were to inflict upon me the pain

which I hate the inventor of dancing, I hate myself, I hate the French woman a thousand times more than all the rest ; but among so many feelings of hatred, not one has the audacity to glance at you. You are always amiable in my eyes. In whatever character I behold you, even at the feet of this cruel rival who comes to disturb all my felicity, I find a thousand charms which have never existed but in you. I was even so foolish that I could not but feel delight that others say those charms in you which I did, and though I am persuaded that to your merit I may perhaps owe the loss of your heart, I would sooner see myself condemned to the depth of despair, than wish you one encomium less than you now receive.

How is it that in your favour love can reconcile feelings so opposite ?—Your merit makes me so jealous of all who approach you, that nobody can be more so ; yet I would go to the end of the world to procure you new admirers. I hate this French woman with so bitter a hatred, that there is nothing, however cruel, of which I believe myself incapable, to destroy her—yet would I wish her the felicity

of being loved by you, did I think her love would render you more happy than you are. I feel myself so blest when you are satisfied, that were it necessary to sacrifice all the pleasure of my life to secure one instant of yours, I would do it without hesitation, why are you not thus to me ? Ah ? did you love as I love, what happiness would be ours. Your felicity would constitute mine, and your own would by this be made more perfect. No earthly being has a heart filled with love like mine ; none other than myself can so perfectly estimate your worth ; and you make me pity you indeed if you are capable of attaching yourself to any other, after being accustomed to such love as mine. Believe me, my friend, it is only with me that you can be happy. I know other women by myself, and I feel that of all on earth love has destined me alone to be yours. What would become of all your delicacy, if it no longer found my heart to answer it ? Those looks so eloquent, and full of meaning, could other eyes reply to them like mine ? No, it is impossible. We alone know how to love and both had died of discontent had



our too souls been bound to any but each other.

### LETTER III.

How long is your absence to continue ? Will you yet pass another day without returning to Lisbon ? Do you not recollect that you have already been away two days ? For my part I think you must desire to find me dead at your return, and that your design in quitting the court was not so much to accompany the king in his visit to the fleet, as to free yourself from a mistress that wearies you : in fact I do so to the extreme ; I must acknowledge it. I am satisfied neither with you nor with myself. An absence of twenty-four hours brings me to death's door. What might be excess of felicity to another is not always to me. Some times I fancy your happiness not sufficiently great : at other times you seem to enjoy so much, I fear, you cannot owe it all to me, and I am displeased with every thing, even with the transports of my love, when I think you do not pay to them enough of attention. Your absence of mind terrifies me ; I wish to see you quite composed when I know all that is passing within you ;

but when you pay no attention to my extravagancies you drive me to despair. I am not rational ; I owe it : but who can be so with excess of love like mine ? I well know that, at the moment I am writing, I ought to be at ease. You are but a step from town, your duty detains you, and the illness of my brother would have prevented my seeing you during the time you have been absent. Above all, there are no women where you are, and that removes one great disquiet from my heart. But, alas ! how many yet remain, and how true it is that a fond woman, if she loves as I do, finds in every thing a torment for herself. All this parade of war may wean you from the peaceful delights of love. Even now, perhaps, you look upon the moment of our separation as a misfortune that must arrive, and you are reasoning to fortify your heart with resolution. Ah ! If the sight of our cannon thus affects you, all the beauties of Europe would be less fatal to me.

Yet I wish not to oppose your duty. Your glory is dearer to me than myself, and well I know you were not born to pass all your days with me ; but I would that the necessity of

absence gave you as much horror as it gives to me ; that you could not think of it but with trembling ; and that inevitable as our separation must appear, you could not believe yourself able to sustain it.

Accuse me not, however, of being gratified by your despair ; you will shed no tear that I shall not desire to wipe away. I will be the first to entreat you to bear courageously what, through excess of grief, will bring to me the grave. Nothing should console me for having been born, did I think my absence left you without consolation. What is it, then, I wish ? I know not. I wish to love you all my life, even to adoration. I wish, if possible, that you might so love me. But to wish all this is, at the same time, to wish myself the most infatuated of women.

Be not disgusted with my weakness ; I have never felt it but for you ; and I would not exchange it for the most solid wisdom, if to be wise it were requisite to love you one degree the less. Your understanding is enchanting ; you have said the same of mine ; but I would forego seeing it in either of us, did it oppose the progress of our folly. Love must

reign over every faculty of our souls. We must be entirely at his disposal ; and if love be satisfied I care not that reason is displeased.

Have you been of this way of thinking since I last saw you ? I tremble with apprehension that you have not entirely possessed your senses. But would it be possible for you to possess them, when speaking of a war that will remove you far from me—no ! you are incapable of such treachery. You cannot have looked upon a soldier who has not drawn from you a sigh ; and when you return I shall have the pleasure of hearing it said that you are at times not in your right mind, and that such has been your situation during your journey : for my part I am sure no person will speak to you of me without accusing me of the same defect. I utter extravagancies that astonish all who are about me ; and if the illness of my brother did not account for my wanderings it would be thought amongst my servants that I am become insane : little is wanting to make me so indeed. You may judge of the incoherency of my mind by that of my letter ; but this assuredly cannot be displeasing to you. The ravages also which your absence has committed

upon my face, ought to be more agreeable to you than the bloom of the finest complexion ; and I should think myself hateful, if being deprived of the sight of you for three days had not disfigured me.

What then shall I be if I lose you for six months ? Alas ! no change in my person will be perceived, for I shall die in parting from you. But I hear some noise in the street, and my heart tells me that it arises from your return. Ah, my God. I am quite overcome ! If it be you who are coming, and I cannot see you on your arrival, and I shall die with anxiety and impatience ; and if you come not after the hopes I have just conceived, vexation, and the transition of emotion in my soul, will deprive me of my senses.

#### LETTER IV.

Will you, then, be always cold and listless ! Can nothing have power to interrupt your repose ! What must be done to disturb it ? Must I, throw myself into the arms of a rival ? For, except this last act of inconstancy, which my love will never allow me to commit, I have given reason to apprehend every other.

I accepted the arm of the Duke d'Almeida on the promenade ; I contrived to sit near him at supper, and even whispered in his ears some trifles, which you might have taken for subjects of importance : yet I could cause no change in your countenance. Ingrate ! Have you really the inhumanity to feel so little love for her who so well loves you ? Have not my cares, my favours, and my truth, been worth one moment of your jealousy ? Does he, who is more dear to me than peace or fame, so little value me, that he regards my loss without dismay ? Alas ! I tremble at the bare idea of losing you. You cast not a look upon another woman that does not cause me a dreadful shuddering ; you offer not a civility upon the most trifling occasion that does not cost me twenty four hours of despair ! Yet can you see me converse under your eyes a whole evening with another, without betraying the least disquietude ! Ah ! you have never loved me ; for too well I know that it is to love, to think that sentiments so different from mine should bear the name of love.

What would I not do to punish you for this coldness ? There are some mementos when I

am so transported with vexation, that I could wish to love another.—But how ? Amidst all this displeasure I see nothing amiable in the world but yourself. Even yesterday when your coldness seemed to rob you of a thousand charms, I could not help admiring all you did. In your disdain, there was I know not what of greatness that expressed the character of your soul, and it was of you I was speaking while whispering to the duke, so little am I mistress of occasions to offend you ! I was dying with the desire of seeing you do something that might afford me a pretext of openly affronting you ; but how should I have been able to do so ? My very anger is but excess of love, and at the moment I am most incensed at your being so phlegmatic, I plainly feel I should find reasons to excuse it did I not love you to distraction. In fact, my brother was observing us ; the least attempt on your part to address me would have been my ruin, but could you not have felt jealousy without making it conspicuous ? I understand the glances of your eyes ; I could easily have read in your looks what others could not perceive as I did ; but alas ! I saw in them no appearance

of what I wished to see : I own that love was there ; but was it love that should have shewn itself at such a time ? Rage and displeasure should have darted forth : you ought to have contradicted every thing I said ; have flattered another woman before my eyes :—in short, you ought to have been jealous, since you had every apparent cause to be so.

But instead of these natural evidences of real love, you bestowed on me a thousand praises. You took the same hand that I had given to the duke, as if it had given you no cause of displeasure, and I expected that you were going to congratulate me on the attachment of the most respectable man of our court. Insensible being !—is it thus that love is shewn ? Is it thus you are beloved by me ? Ah ! had I thought you so cold before I loved you as I do !—What then ? Though I had perceived all that I now perceive, and more if possible, I could not have resisted the impulse of loving you. It is a bias of soul over which I had no power, and which.....but when I think of the moments of delight this passion has afforded me, I cannot repent of having conceived it.



What should I not do, then, if I were satisfied with you, since I am so transported with love at the time I have most cause to complain ! But you know the difference ; you have seen me satisfied ; you have seen me displeased. I have uttered complaints to you, yet in anger or in joy, you have always seen me the most affectionate of women.

Will so noble a disposition inspire you with no emulation ? Love, my dear Insensible ! love as ardently as you are loved. The soul finds no true pleasure but in love. The excess of bliss springs from excess of passion ; and indifference is a greater foe to those who cherish it, than to those whom it withstands. Ah ! had you once really known the genuine transport of affection, how would you envy those who feel it. Even for the possession of your heart, I would not be the owner of your cold tranquility. I prize my raptures as the greatest blessings that were ever mine, and I would rather be condemned to see you no more, than to see you without feeling those emotions which your presence inspires.

## LETTER. V.

Is it to put my docility to the test that you write to me in the manner which you do ? Or is it really possible that you can think all that you have said to me ? Believe me capable of loving another !—grant me patience !—though my delicacy is deeply wounded by this opinion, yet I who love you more than mortal ever was loved, have frequently entertained it of *you*. But to believe this infidelity consummated, to heap invectives upon me, and to labour to persuade me that I shall never see you more, that is what I cannot endure. I have been jealous, for no perfect love is free from jealousy ; but I have never been brutal. Your idea has always been present to me, and even amidst my greatest anger I have still recollected that it was you who were the object of my suspicions.

Alas ! how many faults do I perceive in your passion ; how little are you capable of loving, and how easy it is to discover that you have to love in your heart, since all that drops unpremeditatedly from you is so unworthy the name of love. Alas ! that heart which I have

purchased with the whole of my own ! that heart which I have merited by so many transports, so much fidelity, and which you assured me was mine, is capable of offending me thus ! Its first impulse is to pour forth injurious language ; and when you allow it to act for itself, it expresses nothing but outrage. Go, ungrateful as you are ! I will leave you your suspicions to punish you for having conceived them ; the belief that I am tender and faithful ought to be sufficiently dear to you to make a doubt of my being so a torment. It would be easy for me to cure you of your suspicion, nor is the power of keeping your resentment alive consistent with my own repose.... But I would have you abjure an error which only avenges me :—If you think I resent the injury you have done me, then still believe the rest of your suspicions—I am the most faithless of women.

I have, nevertheless, not seen the man who causes you jealousy ; the letter which is pretended to be mine is not so, and there is no proof to which I could not submit without fear, if I chose to give you that satisfaction. But why should I give it to you ? Is it by

invectives that it is to be obtained ? Would you not have cause to think me as despicable as you represent me, if you owed my justification to your menaces ? You will, you say, never see me more ; you leave Lisbon for fear of being unfortunate enough to meet me ; and you would poinard the dearest of your friends if he committed against you the reason of bringing you into my presence. Cruel man ! What has the sight of me done to you, that it should be so insupportable ? It has never been to you the harbinger of aught but pleasures ; you have never read in my eyes any thing but love, and their ardent desire to express it ; and is this a cause to oblige you to quit Lisbon, that you may never see me more ? If this be the only reason for going, do not go. I will spare you the trouble of avoiding me ; and besides it is rather I who ought to fly than you. The sight of me has cost you only the indulgence of suffering yourself to love, while the sight of you has cost me all the glory and all the happiness of my life !

I confess that it has also been to me a source of bliss. O ! when I picture to myself

the secret emotions which I felt whenever I thought I saw you amidst the throng :—the soft languor which stole away my senses whenever I met your eyes !—the inexpressible transports of my soul whenever we had the opportunity of a moment's conversation !—I know not how I was able to exist before I saw you, nor how I shall exist when I see you no more !—But what I have felt, you ought to have felt ; you were beloved, and you told me that you loved ; yet you are the first to propose seeing me no more !—Ah ! you shall be satisfied— never while I live will I see you again.

It would, however, give me extreme pleasure to reproach you personally with your ingratitude and my revenge would, me thinks, be more complete, if my eyes and all my actions confirmed to you my innocence. That innocence is so perfect !—the falsehood which has been told you is so easy to refute, that you could not talk with me, even for a quarter of an hour, without being convinced of your injustice, and without dying of regret that you have committed it. This idea has already twice or thrice promoted me to fly to your

habitation, and I do not know whether it will not lead me thither, in spite of myself, before the day is at an end : for my anger is violent enough to deprive me of my reason. But no, I have so long been in the delightful habit of studying your dispositon and wishes, that I am led to fear I should displease you by so bold a measure. I have always seen you act with unequalled discretion ; you have been more careful than myself of my reputation ; nay, you have even carried your precautions sometimes so far as to compel me to complain of them. What then would you, say, if I were to do anything which could betray our amours, and affect my honour amongst persons of character ? You would despise me, and I should die if I thought you capable of it ; for whatever happens, I wish always to possess your esteem.

Complain ! abuse me ! betray me ! hate me ! since you can do it ; but never despise me. From the moment that your love no longer constitutes your felicity I may live without it, but I cannot live without your esteem, and I believe this is the reason why I am so impatient to see you ; for it is not

possible that my impatience can arise from tenderness : I should be made indeed to love a man who treats me as I am treated by you.

Nevertheless, if your anger be considered under a proper point of view, it appears to be caused solely by an excess of passion. You would not be so transported with anger, if your love were less vehement. Ah ! why cannot I persuade myself of this truth ! how dear to me, then, would be the outrages which you have committed against me ! But no, I will not flatter myself with this pleasing delusion. You are guilty.—Even should you not be so, I will believe it, that I may punish you for having suffered me to think so. I shall not go today to any place where you can see me ; I shall pass the afternoon with the Marchioness de Castro, who is indisposed, and whom you do not visit. To conclude, I am resolved to be angry, and this is perhaps the last letter that you will ever receive from me.

## LETTER VI.

Is it indeed I who am now writing to you ?

Are you the same being that you formerly were ? By what miracle does it happen that you have testified your love to me without its inspiring my joy ? I have seen you manifest an ardor and impatient anxiety ; I have read in your eyes the same desires to which you have always hitherto found my feelings in such perfect accordance. They were no less ardent than when they constituted my sole felicity. I am as tender, as faithful, as I ever was ; and yet I find myself cold and careless. It seems as if you had only cheated my senses by an illusion which wanted the power to reach my heart.

Ah ! how dear do these reproaches cost me which you draw down upon yourself ! Of how many transports am I not robbed by a single day of your negligence. I know not what secret demon incessantly whispers to me that it is to my anger I owe all your tender assiduities, and that there is more policy than sincerity in the sentiments which you have avowed. It must, in truth, be confessed that delicacy is a gift of love which is not always so precious as we would persuade ourselves. I acknowledge that it gives a zest to our pleasures, but then what



keenness it adds to our sorrows. I still imagine that I see you in that absence of mind which has caused me so many sighs. Do not, my love, deceive yourself on this point : your ardors are the source of all my felicity, but they would be the source of all my indignation, if I thought I owed them to anything save the natural impulse of your heart. I fear studied actions much more than coldness of temperament. Shall I tell you the whole of my fancies on this subject ? It was the excess of your transports yesterday which gave birth to my suspicions. You seemed out of yourself ; and through all that you appeared to be I sought your real self. O heavens ! what would have become of me had I found you guilty of dissimulation ? I prefer your love to my fortune, to my glory, to my life ; but I could more easily support the certainty of your hatred, than the deceitful semblance of of your love. It is not to the exterior that I look, but to the feelings of the soul. Be cold, be negligent, be even fickle, if you can be so, but never dissimulate. Deception is the greatest crime that can be committed against love ; and I would much sooner pardon you

for infidelity, than for using art to conceal it from my knowledge. You said a number of fine things to me yesterday afternoon, and I wish you could have seen yourself at that moment as I saw you. You would have found yourself quite a different being from what you generally are. Your mien was yet more noble than it naturally is, your passion sparkled in your eyes, and rendered them more piercing and more tender. I saw that your heart was on your lips. Oh ! how happy am I, if it did not show itself there under false colors ! In truth, I put too much to the test, and it is not in my power to try you less than I do. The pleasure of loving with my whole soul is a bliss for which I am indebted to you, nor is it now possible for you, to ravish it from me. I know full well that in spite of myself I shall always adore you, and I am equally certain that I shall still adore you even in spite of yourself. These are dangerous assurances ; yet why should they be ? Yours is not a heart that must be retained by fears ; I should never feel assured of the safety of my conquest, if preserved it by that tie alone. Politeness and gratitude count for much in friendship, but

they go for nothing in Love. We must obey the heart without consulting the reason. By the sight of a beloved object the soul is rapt away, however strong our reason may be—at least such I feel is my case with regard to you. It is neither the habit of seeing you, nor the fear of giving you pain by my absence, that compels me to seek your presence..it is an irresistible eagerness which springs from the heart, without artifice, and without reflection. I frequently seek you even in places where I am sure that I shall not find you. If it be thus with you, the instinct of our hearts will doubtless make them everywhere meet each other. I am compelled to pass the greater part of the day in a place where, alas ! you cannot be. But let us abandon ourselves to the passion which fills our hearts, let us allow our desires to guide us, and you will find that we shall not fail to pass agreeably even those hours which we cannot pass together.

## LETTER VII

Let us not keep our vows, my friend, I conjure you ! it costs us too much to

keep them. Let us see each other, and, if possible, let it be immediately. You have suspected me of infidelity ; you have declared your suspicions in a manner most insulting ; yet I love you more dearly than myself, and cannot live without seeing you. Wherefore impose on ourselves a voluntary absence, have we not enough to experience that is inevitable ? Come, then, restore perfect joy to my soul by a moment of unrestrained conversation.

You tell me you wish to come only to entreat my pardon ! Ah ! come, though it be to reproach me ; come I conjure you. I would rather see your eyes darting anger, than not see them at all ; but I hazard nothing in leaving you the choice. I know I shall see them affectionate, and glowing with love ; for so they have already appeared this morning at church. I read in them the shame of your pardon. Let us speak no more of this quarrel ; or if we do speak of it, let it be to guard ourselves from such another. How could either of us doubt that our love was reciprocal ? It is but for love that we exist. Such a

heart as I have would never have been given me, had it not been destined to be filled with your image; you would not have the soul you possess, had you not been formed to love; and it was only that you might be loved to the degree you merit, and that you might love as much as you are beloved, that heaven made us susceptible of the flame. But tell me, I pray you, have you felt what I have felt since we pretended to be at strife? For never we been so in reality; we are incapable of being so, and our destinies prevail over every cause of displeasure. Great God! how painful have I found this dissimulation! How have my eyes done violence to themselves in disguising their expression; and what foes must we be to ourselves, to check confidence for a moment, where there is love such as ours.

My feet involuntarily led me where I was likely to meet you. My heart, so sweetly accustomed to overflow at your approach, sprung to my eyes to express its delight, and, as I forced myself to refuse it their aid, it smote me with such

pangs as can be conceived only by those who have felt them.

I think, too, that one soul has animated us. I have met you in places where chance alone could not have brought you ; and if I must confess all my little vanities, I have never seen so much love in your looks as since you have endeavored to conceal it. How silly it is to torment ourselves thus ! why do we not unveil our whole souls to each other ? I knew all the tenderness of yours, and I could have distinguished all the emotions of its love from those of any other ; but I knew not your anger nor your pride. I knew you were capable of jealousy since you could love, but I knew not what character that passion would assume in your heart. It would have been treachery to leave me longer in doubt of it ; and I cannot but feel grateful to your injustice, since it has led me to so important a discovery. I did wish you to be jealous, I have found you so ; but now renounce your jealousy as I renounce my curiosity. Whatever look a lover wears, there is none that so becomes him as the

happy lover's air. It is a great error to say that the lover is a dull and uninteresting being when he is blessed. He who is not pleasing in such a character, would be less so in any other. Where there is not refinement enough to wear it with advantage, it is the heart that must be blamed and not the happiness.

Come quickly, my love, come quickly, and confirm this truth. I should be unwilling indeed to lose time upon so long a letter, did I not know that you cannot see me at the hour I am writing to you. Whatever pleasure I find in thus conversing with you, how infinitely more delightful would be a mutual conversation ! This is solitary joy which I only taste, but in our interviews you partake the pleasure.

Yet I cannot have the one but when decorum will permit ; while the other depends on myself alone. At this moment, when every person in our house is at rest, and perhaps feels happy in being able to repose, I enjoy a happiness that the sweetest sleep could not yield me. I write to you ; my heart speaks to you as if you

could reply to it ; it consecrates to you its waking hours and its impatience. Ah ! how happy are we when we truly love ! How I pity those who languish in the inactivity to which freedom gives birth. Good morning to you my friend, the day begins to dawn. It had dawned much sooner than usual had it consulted my impatience ; but it is not in love as we are. I must pardon then its slowness, and endeavor to beguile it by a few hours' slumber, that it may be the less insupportable.

### LETTER VIII.

Think, my love, to what an extreme you have been wanting in foresight ! Ah ! unfortunate that you are, you have been misled, and you have misled me by illusive hopes. The passion upon which you raised so many projects of delight, presents you nothing now but separation that occasions it. Must then this separation, to which my grief, ingenious as it is, can give no name sufficiently expressive of its horror, must it forever take from me the sight of those dear eyes in which I was used to see so much love ! those eyes



that were to me as everything, and gave me full content !

Alas ! mine are deprived of the only beams that animated them ! they have nothing left but tears, and I have only used them in incessant weeping, since I heard you were resolved upon a separation ; it will be insupportable to me, and must speedily bring me to the grave.

Nevertheless, I seem to have a love for the misery which you alone have brought upon me. My life was at your disposal from the first moment I beheld you, and I feel some pleasure in sacrificing it to you.

A thousand times a day I send my sighs to you, they seek you everywhere ; yet all they bring me back in recompense for so many disquietudes is the too sure foreboding of my hapless fortune, which cruelly will not permit me to indulge a hope, but at every moment whispers, cease, unhappy Marianne ! cease to consume thyself in vain, nor longer seek a lover whom thou wilt never see again. He has passed the seas but to avoid thee ; he is in France encircled with pleasures ; he absolves thee from thy tenderness, and thanks thee not for it. But no, I cannot bring myself

to think of you so injuriously ; I am but too much interested in justifying you. I will not believe that you have forgotten me.

Am I not sufficiently wretched, without tormenting myself with unjust suspicions ? And wherefore should I endeavor to banish the remembrance of all the attentions which you lavished to convince me of your love ? Those sweet attentions so charmed me, that I should be indeed ungrateful, did I not love you with all the warmth my passion inspired, while I enjoyed the proofs of yours. How is it that the recollection of moments so delightful should become thus painful ? Why must they, in contradiction to their nature, serve only to oppress my heart ? Alas ! your last letter reduced it to a strange condition : its agitation was so strong, that it seemed endeavoring to separate itself from me, and go in quest of you. I was so overcome with these violent emotions, that I remained more than three hours bereft of all sense—I wished not to return to a life which I must lose for you, since I am not to preserve it for your sake : however, in spite of myself, I again beheld the light. I did flatter myself with

the idea that I was dying for love : and besides, I rejoiced to be more exposed to feel my heart torn with anguish for your absence.

Since this attack I have been several times ill : but can I be ever free from sufferings, while deprived of seeing you ? I bear them, nevertheless, without a murmur, since they proceed from you. Is this then my recompense for loving you so tenderly ? But it matters not ; I am resolved to adore you all my life, and never to look upon another. You will do well too, I assure you, to love no other person. Could you be satisfied with a passion less ardent than mine ? You will, perhaps, meet with more beauty (though you have told me I was sufficiently beautiful), but you will never meet with so much love—and all the rest is nothing.

Do not fill up your letter with affairs of no importance, nor tell me again to remember you. I cannot forget you neither do I forget that you have given me hope that you would come to pass some time with me—Alas ! why not your whole life ? Were it possible for me to quit this miserable cloister, I would not wait in Portugal for the fulfilment of your promise. Regardless of appearances, I would

fly to seek you, love you and follow you through the world. I dare not flatter myself that this can ever be : I will not cherish a hope that would assuredly yield me some pleasure ; henceforth I will be sensible to grief alone.

I own, that the opportunity my brother has afforded me of writing to you, has excited some sensation of joy in me, and for a moment suspended my despair. I conjure you to tell me wherefore you sought, as you did, to captivate my soul, since you well knew you were to leave me ! And wherefore have you been so eager to make me unhappy ? Why did you not leave me in the repose of my cloister ? Had I done you any wrong ? Yet pardon me, I impute nothing to you ; I have no right to think of blame ; I accuse only the severity of my fate ; in separating us, it has inflicted all the evil that it could. It cannot separate our hearts ; love, stronger than fate, has united them forever : if my heart is still dear to you, write to me often. I surely merit that you should take some little pains to let me know the state of your heart, and of your fortune. Above all, come to see me. Adieu !. I know

not how to quit this paper ; it will fall into your hands. Would the same happiness were mine ! Alas, senseless that I am ! well know that is not possible. Adieu—I can proceed no further. Adieu ; love me always, and be the cause of my enduring still severer sorrow.

## LETTER IX

It is doing the greatest injustice in the world to the sentiments of my heart, to endeavour to make them known to you by what I write. How happy should I be could you truly judge of them by the warmth of your own ! but this I must not expect from you, and I cannot refrain from saying, much less bitterly indeed than I feel it, that you ought not to wrong me, as you do, by a forgetfulness which drives me to despair, and which is even disgraceful to yourself.

It is but just, at least, you should suffer me to complain of the evils I anticipated, when I saw you were resolved to quit me. I am now quite convinced I was mistaken

in supposing that, because the excess of my love made me appear above suspicion, and merited more fidelity than is usually to be met with, you would act more nobly than is the general practice upon such occasions.

The inclination you have to betray me prevails, in truth over the justice that you owe for all I have done.

I should certainly be very unhappy if you were to love me only because I love you, and I should lament not owing everything to your inclination alone ; but even this is not the case—I have not received a letter from you these six months.

I attribute all these sufferings to the blindness with which I indulged my affection for you. Ought I not to have foreseen that my pleasures would terminate much sooner than my love ? Could I hope that you would remain all your life in Portugal, and renounce your fortune and your country to think only of me ? My sorrows admit of no relief, and remembrance of my joys overwhelms me with desair.

Alas ! and all my wishes then are unavailing.. and I shall never again behold you

in this room with all that ardor and rapturous emotion which you were accustomed to display. But alas ! I mistake, I know but too well now that the transports which took entire possession of my head and heart, were excited in you only by the transient feeling of pleasure, and that with that feeling they expired.

In those too happy moments I ought to have called reason to my aid to moderate the fatal excess of my delights, and warn me of all I suffer now : but I gave myself up entirely to you, and I was in no state to think of what would have empoisoned my bliss, and prevented me from fully enjoying the ardent expressions of your passions. I was too happy in the consciousness of your presence, to reflect that you would be one day separated from me.

I recollect, however, having sometimes said you would render me unhappy ; but those alarms were soon dissipated. I even found pleasure in sacrificing them to you, and in abandoning myself entirely to the enchantment and deceit of your protestations. I well know the remedy for all my

sufferings, and I should soon be relieved from them could I cease to love you ; but alas ! what a remedy is this ! I would endure yet more, rather than forget you. Alas ! is it in my power to forget you ! cannot reproach myself with having for one moment wished to divest myself of love for you : you are more to be pitied than I am, and it is better to suffer as I do, than enjoy the insipid pleasures that you find among your beauties of France.

I envy not your indifference. You excite my compassion. I defy you to forget me entirely. I flatter myself with having such power over your soul, that without me all your joys must be imperfect ; and I am more fortunate than you, because I am more occupied.

I have been lately appointed to receive the visitors in the parlor of the convent. All who speak to me think I am insane ; I know not what I reply to them : and certainly the nuns must be as insane as myself to think me capable of any charge. Ah ! I envy the happiness of Emmanuel and Francisco : why am not I continually



with you as they are ? I was willing to follow you, and surely I should have served you with more zeal.

I wish for nothing in the world but to see you....at least remember me. I content myself now with your remembrance, but I dare not assure myself of it. I did not confine my hopes to being remembered by you when I saw you every day : but you have made me feel that I must submit to all that you decree. Nevertheless I do not repent of having adored you ; I rejoice that you subdued my soul. Your cruel and perhaps eternal absence diminishes, in no degree, the warmth of my affection. I make no secret of it; I would have it known to all the world ; I have sacrificed decorum to you. I delight, I triumph in the sacrifice. As I have once loved you, my honour and religion shall henceforth consist in loving you through life.

I do not tell you all these things to induce you to write to me. Ah no ! do not constrain yourself ; I would have nothing from you that does not flow directly from your heart, and I refuse all testimonies of

love which you have power to withhold. I shall have pleasure in excusing you, because perhaps you will have pleasure in not taking the trouble to write ; for I feel entirely disposed to pardon all your faults.

A French officer this morning had the charity to speak of you to me for more than three hours, He told me peace was made with France. If that be the case, could you not come here and take me back with you? But I am not worthy of that ; do what you please ; my love no longer depends on your conduct to me.

Since your departure I have not enjoyed a single moment's health, and I have had no kind of pleasure but in repeating your name, a thousand times a day. Some of the nuns who know the deplorable state into which you have plunged me, speak of you very frequently. I go as seldom as possible out of the room where you have been so many times, and I look incessantly at your portrait, which is a thousand times dearer to me than life. It affords me some pleasure ; but it likewise causes me a great deal of anguish when I think that I shall,

perhaps, never see you again. Yet wherefore should it be possible that I shall never see you again? Have you for ever abandoned me? Alas! I despair. Your poor Marianne can support herself no longer.... she sinks as she concludes this letter. Adieu, adieu....have pity on me.

### LETTER X.

What will become of me, and what would you have me do? I find my situation widely different from what I had conceived it would be. I did expect that you would write to me from every place you passed through, and that your letters would be very long; that you would sustain my passion by the hope of seeing you again; that an entire confidence in your fidelity would afford me some degree of repose, and that, in the mean time, I should remain in a state not quite intolerable; free from extreme anguish. I had even conceived some feeble projects of using every effort of which I should be capable to effect my cure, could I be once thoroughly assured that you had

quite forgotten me. Your absence, some feelings of devotion, the fear of utterly ruining all that remains of health by such incessant watchings and anxieties, the little probability of return, the coldness of your love and your last farewell, your departure, grounded upon very insufficient pretexts, and a thousand other reasons, which are but too good and yet too unavailing, all seemed to promise me, should it become necessary, an effectual aid : in short have nothing to contend with but myself I could never suspect my weakness, nor apprehend all that I now suffer.

Alas! how much am I to be pitied that you do not share my grief but that I alone am wretched. The thought is death to me. I die, too, with the fear that you were never really sensible of our pleasures. Yes, I see now the treachery of your whole conduct. You deceived me every time you were delighted to be alone with me. To my importunate fondness only I have owed your transports and your seeming warmth. You deliberately laid a plan to ensnare me ; you considered my passion as a triumph for yourself, but never

did it deeply touch your heart. Are you not sadly pitiable, and must you not possess indeed very little delicacy, if this be all the satisfaction you have found in my affection? How is it possible that with so much love I have not been able to render you completely blest? I regret, for your sake alone, the innumerable pleasures you have lost; must I feel too that you have not been willing to enjoy them? Ah! had you but known them you would surely find that they are of infinitely greater value than the poor triumph of deceiving me; you would feel that there is a far greater happiness a sweeter thrill, in passionately loving than in being loved. I know not what I am, nor what I wish for. I am reeved by a thousand opposite tortures. Can so deplorable a condition be conceived? I love you to distraction, yet have such consideration for you that I would not dare, perhaps to wish that you were agitated by the same feelings. I should kill myself, or I should die of grief, did I believe that you have never any rest, that your whole life is nothing but vexation and distress, that you weep incessantly, and that everything is hateful to you. My own sufferings

are more than I can bear; how then should I support the anguish of yours, which would wound me a thousand times more deeply?

But yet I cannot bring myself to wish that you should never think of me, and to speak sincerely to you, I am madly jealous of every thing that gives you pleasure, that gratifies your heart, or even your taste, while in France.

I know not why I write to you. I foresee that you will merely pity me, and it is not your pity that I want. I am irritated with myself when I reflect on all that I have sacrificed to you. I have lost my reputation, I have exposed myself to the fury of my relations, to the severity of our laws against offending nuns, and to your ingratitude which, of all these misfortunes appears to me the greatest.

Nevertheless, I plainly feel that my remorse is not sincere; that, with my heart's entire sanction, I would have run still greater dangers for you, and I find a horrible delight in having risked my life honour. Ought not all I hold most dear to have been at your disposal. And shall I not rejoice in having

so devoted them ? I even think my sufferings and my love are not enough, though, alas ! I have little reason to be satisfied with you. Faithless that I am, I live and endeavour to preserve existence, rather than to lose it. Ah ! I almost die with shame ; my despair exists then in my letters only ! Had I loved as much as I a thousand times declared I did, should I not, long since, have died ? I have deceived you, and you have reason to complain of me. Alas ! why do you not complain ? I have seen your departure, I cannot hope ever to see you return, and yet I still exist. I have been insincere to you, I implore your pardon.....but do not grant it to me ....Treat me severely.

Think not that my feelings are sufficiently ardent. Be yet more difficult to be satisfied. Tell me you wish that I may die for love of you. Assist me thus, I pray you, to surmount the weakness of my sex, and put an end to all my irresolutions by complete despair.

The fatal termination of my woes would surely force you to think often of me ; my memory would be dear to you, and you

would, perhaps, be sensibly affected by my dying some extraordinary death. Would not this be better than the condition to which you have reduced me ? Adieu ! Would I had never seen you ! Ah ! how acutely I feel the fallacy of that suggestion ! Well do I know, at the moment I am writing to you, that I would sooner far be miserable in loving you, than wish to have never seen you.

I yield without a murmur then to my sad fate, since you have not been willing to render it more happy. Adieu ! promise that if I die of grief, you will tenderly regret me, and that the violence of my passion shall at least give you a disrelish and aversion for every thing on earth. This will console me ; and if I must give you up forever, I shall be glad not to leave you to any other.

Would it not be very cruel in you to avail yourself of my despair that you might interest the more, and show how warm a passion you had excited : once more adieu. My letters are too long, I pay too little regard to your feelings ; but I entreat your pardon and dare



hope you will shew some indulgence to a poor insane being who, as you know, was not so until she loved you. Adieu, I fear I say too much to you of my misery : yet I thank you from my heart for the desperation you have caused me, and loath the tranquility in which I lived before I knew you. Adieu, my love increases every moment. Ah! how many things I have yet to tell you.

## LETTER XI.

Your lieutenant has just informed me that a tempest has obliged you to put back to a port of Algarve. I fear you must have suffered a great deal at sea, and that apprehension has so haunted me, that I have not bestowed a thought upon my own sufferings. Do you really think that your lieutenant takes more concern in what befalls you than I do ? If not, why is he better informed upon the subject than I am ? In short, why did you not write to me ?

I am unfortunate indeed if you have not been able to find an opportunity since your-departure, and still more so, if you have found

one, and not been willing to write. Your injustice and your ingratitude are extreme : yet I should be driven to despair if they were to bring down upon you any misfortune, and I would much rather that they remained unpunished than see them avenged.

I refuse to yield credit to all those signs which might convince me that you no longer love, and I feel much more desposed blindly to abandon myself to my passion, than to dwell upon the reasons, which you give me, to complain of your want of attention.

How much disquietude would you not have spared me, had you, when I first knew you, shown as little tenderness, as it appears to me, that you have for some time past displayed. But who would not, like me have been deluded by so much ardor, and who would not have believed it sincere? How long and difficult is the task of learning to suspect the sincerity of those we love !

I see plainly that the least excuse is sufficient for you ; and, even without your taking the pains to make any to me, my love serves you so faithfully that I can only consent to think you culpable, that I may

enjoy the delightful pleasure of justifying you myself.

You won me entirely over by your assiduities, you inflamed me by your transports, you charmed me by the sweetness of your manners, you dispelled all my fears by your oaths. \* My violent inclination seduced me ; and the consequences of a passion which, at its commencement, was so pleasant, so blest, are only tears, sighs and a miserable death ; nor have I any remedy whatever in my power.

It is true that in loving you I have enjoyed transcendant pleasures ; but I pay for them the price of unexampled anguish ; every feeling that you excite within me runs to extremes. Had I inflexibly resisted your love ; had I given you occasions of uneasiness or jealousy, merely to inflame you the more ; had you discovered any artificial prudaries in my deportment ; had I ; in short, exerted my reason in opposition to the natural predilection I felt for you, then you would have had a right to punish me severely, and to avail yourself of your power : but I thought you worthy to be loved before you talked

of loving me. You declared an ardent passion for me ; I was enraptured by your avowal, and I yielded myself up to love you even to infatuation.

You were not blind as I was ; why then have you permitted me to bring myself to this condition ? What could you look for in my affections, which must only have been wearisome to you ? You well knew you were not always to be in Portugal, and wherefore did you single me out to render me so wretched ? You might certainly have some beautiful woman in this country, with whom you might have enjoyed as much pleasure, as it was only of gross pleasure you were in pursuit ; who might have loved you tenderly as long as you were in her sight, whom time might have consoled for your absence, and whom you might have quitted without perfidy or cruelty. The conduct you have pursued, displays the tyrant fond of persecuting, rather than the lover who should study only to give delight.

Alas ! Wherefore do you exercise so much severity upon the heart that is entirely

yours ? I plainly see that you are as much inclined to be prejudiced against me, as I have been to be prepossessed in your favour.

Without the aid of all my love, and without feeling that I had done anything extraordinary, I could have withstood reason much more powerful than those that have prevailed on you to leave me. I should have thought them very weak ; and there are none whatever that should have torn me from you : but you gladly availed yourself any pretext that presented itself to you for returning to France.. A ship was on the point of sailing.. Why did you not let it sail ? Your family had written to you. Are you ignorant of all the persecutions which I have suffered from mine ? Your honour called on you to abandon me.—Have I taken any thought of my own ? You were obliged to go and serve your sovereign.—If all that is said of him be true, he has little need of your assistance, and would have excused you for not giving it.

I should have been too happy could we

have passed our lives together. Since, however, a cruel absence must separate us, I must rejoice that I have not been faithless; not for all the world contains would I have been guilty of so black an action. You knew every thought of my heart, all the tenderness which I felt, yet you could resolve to leave me for ever, and expose me to all the terrors which I must feel that you will never more think of me—except to sacrifice me to a new passion!

I am quite conscious that I love you like a woman who has lost her senses: yet I do not complain of all the violence of my heart: I accustom myself to its persecutions, and I even could not live without that pleasure, which I find and enjoy in loving you amidst a thousand sorrows.

But I am incessantly and extremely tormented by the hate and disgust which I feel for every thing. My family, my friends, and this convent, all are insupportable to me. All that I am obliged to see, and all that I am compelled to do, is odious in my sight: I am so jealous of my passion, that it seems to me as if all my actions, all my

duties, centered in you alone : yes, I feel some scruples if I do not devote to you every moment of my life.

What, alas ! should I do, were my heart not filled by so much hate and so much love ? How to lead a tranquil and languishing life, could I survive all the thoughts by which I am now unceasingly occupied ? I could never bear this void, this insensibility of the soul.

Every one perceives the entire change in my temper, my manners, and my person. My mother spoke to me about it sharply and afterwards with some degree of mildness. I know not what I said in reply to her. It seems to me as if I had confessed everything. The most rigid of the nuns take compassion upon the state to which I am reduced. It even inspires them with some regard and tenderness for me. Every body is touched with my love, yet you remain in a profound indifference, you write me nothing but cold letters, full of repetitions, half the paper is not filled, and they show plainly that while you write them, you are only anxious to get to the conclusion.

Donna Brites teased me lately to make me leave my room, and, thinking to divert me, she led me to take the air on the balcony which looks towards Mertola. I followed her, and was immediately struck with a cruel remembrance, which made me weep for the remainder of the day. She led me back, and I threw myself up to a thousand reflections on the little probability there was that I should ever be freed from my woes.

What is done to solace me sharpens my grief, and I find even in the remedies which are offered to me particular reasons to increase my affliction. In that place I had frequently seen you pass by with an air that charmed me, and it was in that balcony that I stood on the fatal day when I began to feel the first effects of my unfortunate passion. I thought that you wished to please me, though you knew me not : I persuaded myself that you had particularly remarked me among all the others that were standing with me. I imagined that when you stopped you were glad I could see you better : and that you wished me to admire your address when you put your horse into a gallop. I



shuddered when you rode him into a dangerous spot : in short, I took a secret interest in all your actions. I felt plainly that you were not indifferent to me, and all that you did I considered as done for me.

You know but too well the consequences of this beginning : yet, though I have no longer any reason to act cautiously, I ought not to speak of them to you, lest I should render you more guilty, if possible, than you now are, and have to reproach myself with making so many useless efforts to oblige you to be faithful.—Faithful you will not be. Can I hope from my letters and my reproaches that which my love and my entire devotion to you have failed to secure from your ingratitude ?

I am too certain of my misfortune ; your unjust conduct leaves me not the least power to doubt of it, and, since you have abandoned me, I have every thing to dread.

Is it for me alone that you will have charms, and will you not appear pleasing in other eyes ? I believe that I should not be sorry if the sentiments of others justified in some degree my own ; and I could wish that

all the women in France might consider you as amiable, but that none might love, and that none might please you. This idea is ridiculous, is impossible : nevertheless, I have sufficiently proved that you are not capable of a strong attachment ; that you could easily forget me, without any assistance, and without being constrained to do so by a new passion.

I am convinced that though you find no great pleasure there, you continue in France of your own accord. The fatigue of not making an adequate return to my transports, detain you. Ah ! you have nothing to fear from me—I shall be contented to see you now and then, and to know only that we are near each other. But perhaps I am flattering myself ; while you are more interested by the vigour and coldness of another than you ever were by my love..  
 ....Is it possible that severity can attach you ?

But before you yield up your heart to the dominion of a violent passion, consider well the excess of my sorrows, the inconsistency of my conduct, the varied agitation of my feelings the extravagance of my letters, my sanguine

hopes, my despair, my wishes, and my jealousy. Ah! you will make yourself miserable: I conjure you to be warned by the state in which I am, and then if I have suffered for you, to you at least my sufferings will not be useless.

Five or six month ago, you reposed in me an unwelcome confidence: you confessed candidly to me that you had loved a lady of your own country. If she detains you from me, tell me so without hesitation: I shall no longer languish for your return.

Some remains of hope support me still; but if I am only to hope, I would rather lose that support at once, and with it lose myself. Send me her picture, some of her letters. Tell me all she says to you—In that I may find something to console me, or to end my sorrows.

In my present state I cannot long remain, and for me there can be no favourable change. I wish too for the picture of your brother and your lovely sister: all that relates to you is dear to me; to whatever you love I am entirely devoted. I am no longer of the same disposition that I have been. There are even moments, when

I fancy that I could submit to serve her your love: your ill treatment and contempt have so humbled me, that I dare not reflect, lest I should think, that my own jealousy has been the cause of your neglect, and that I have deeply injured you by my reproaches. I often feel, that I ought not to expose to you, with the frenzy that I do, those sentiments which you disapprove.

The officer has waited long for this letter: I had resolved to write in a style that should not displease you: but what an extravagant letter have I written.—I must conclude—Alas I cannot resolve to do it. While I write, I seem to converse with you, and you almost appear present to me. . . The next shall not be so long nor so troublesome; under this assurance you may open and read it. It is true I ought not to speak to you of a passion which displeases you and I will speak of it no more.

It is now nearly a year, since I gave myself up to you without reserve. Your passion appeared to me so ardent, so sincere, and I could never have thought that my fondness would have disgusted you so much as to induce you to take a journey of five hundred leagues and expose yourself to all the dangers of the

sea, to escape from it. No one ever experienced such treatment as I have done. You can remember my shame, my confusion, my disorder; but you do not remember, that you bound yourself by oaths to love me forever.

The officer who is to bring you this, sends to me for the fourth time to tell me that he wishes to be gone. How very pressing he is ! He too abandons, no doubt, some unhappy one of this country. Adieu ! I suffer more in concluding this letter, than you did in leaving me, though perhaps forever. Adieu ; I dare not call you by those thousand endearing names I would; a thousand times more than I thought. How dear you are to me ! Oh, how cruel you are to me ! You never write to me—I cannot refrain from telling you, that once more—I am beginning again, and the officer will be gone.—No matter—let him go ! I write more for myself than you, I only seek to console myself. The length of my letter will alarm you—you will not read it. What have I done, that I should be thus miserable, and why have you embittered the remainder of my life ? Oh that I had been born in another country ! Adieu ! forgive me,

I dare not now ask you to love me. Behold to what my fate has reduced me ! Adieu.

## LETTER XII.

**NAWAB SALAR JUNG BAHADUR**

I write to you for the last time; and I hope to convince you, by the difference of style and manner of this letter, that you have at length persuaded me that you no longer love me, and that, therefore, I ought not to love you any longer.

I shall accordingly send you, by the first conveyance, all that I yet possess of yours. Fear not that I shall write to you; I will not even write your name on the packet. I have charged Donna Brites with the whole of the arrangement, her in whom I have been accustomed to place confidence of a very different kind; her care will be less suspected than mine she will take every necessary precaution, in order to assure me that you have received the portraits and the bracelets that you gave me.

I, however, wish you to know that I have for some days felt strongly inclined to burn and destroy every relic that would remind me of you, those pledges of your

love that were so dear to me ; but I have already discovered so much weakness, that I am convinced I could never be capable of proceeding to these extremities. I am determined, therefore, to endure all the anguish of parting with them, and give you at least a little chagrin.

I will acknowledge, to my shame and yours, that I have found myself more attached to those trifles than I am willing to describe and I felt that I stood in need of all the arguments reason could muster, to enable me to part with any of them, even when I could no longer flatter myself with your attachment ; but perseverance in any one design works wonders. I delivered them into the hands of Donna Brites.—How many tears this resolution cost me ! After a thousand emotions, and a thousand incertitudes which you are a stranger to, and of which I shall assuredly render you no account. I have conjured her never to mention them to me, nor restore them to me, though I should only ask to look upon them once more and to send them to you without my knowing anything of it.

I never knew the excess of my love until

I exerted every effort to cure myself to it. I believed I should never have undertaken such a task could I have fore seen the difficulties and the obstacle to its success ; for I am persuaded that I should have felt less disagreeable sensations in loving you, ingrate as you are ! than in abandoning you forever. I have proved that you were dear to me than my passion, I have had strange emotions to struggle with, after your injurious conduct had rendered your person odious to me.

The natural pride of my sex has not assisted me in forming any resolutions against you. Alas ! I have suffered your contempt, I could have supported your hatred, and all the jealousy which your attachment to another could have given me ; I should have had at least some passion to struggle with ; but your indifference is insupportable to me, your impertinent protestations of friendship, and the ridiculous civilities of your last letter, have shown me that you have received all mine, and that they have been incapable of inspiring the least emotion in your heart, and yet you have read



them ! Ingrate, I am yet weak enough to be distracted at the idea of not being able to flatter myself that you never received them.

I heartily detest you. Did I ever ask you to tell me sincerely the truth ? Why could you not suffer me to enjoy my passion ? You had only to desist from writing to me ; I should not have sought the fatal truth. Am I not indeed unfortunate, in that I could not oblige you to take some pains to deceive me, and to be no longer able to excuse me ? Know that I perceive you are unworthy of my sentiments and that I have discovered all the dark shades of your character.

Therefore (if all I have done for you may entitle me to ask any favour at your hands) I conjure you to write to me no more, and to assist me to forget you entirely. If you were to evince, in even the slightest manner, that the perusal of this letter pained you, I should perhaps believe you, and perhaps also your confession would inflame me with sentiments of anger, and with other sensations.

Do not, then, interfere with my conduct ; you might overturn all my designs and resolutions, whatever part you take. I do not wish to know the success of this letter. Trouble not the state for which I am preparing myself ; you ought to be content with what you have already made me suffer. Whatever designs you might have formed for rendering me unhappy, deprive me not of my present state of incertitude. I hope I shall in time become a little more tranquil. I promise not to hate you ; I feel too forcibly the violence of my sentiments to dare to undertake it. I am persuaded that I shall find in this country a more faithful lover . . . . But, alas ! who can inspire me with love ? Can the passion of another occupy my soul ? Has mine had any influence over you ? and have I not felt that a wounded heart can never forget the cause of those transports which were unknown to it ; that all its emotions are attached to the idol who gave birth to them ; that its first wound can neither be healed nor effaced. ; that all the passions which offer their assistance to fill it with other sensibility which soothe it into peace, promise

in vain that delicious sensibility which it can no longer find ; that all the pleasures it seeks without being anxious to find them, only serve to prove that nothing is so dear as the remembrance of its woes. Why have you made me experience the imperfection and vexation of an attachment which ought not to have lasted forever, and the miseries which attend a violent passion, that is not returned ? Alas ! why does blind affection and cruel destiny determine us to attach ourselves to those who are insensible, rather than to those who would feel an equal passion ! When even I might hope for some solace in a new armour, and that I might find at length a faithful lover, I pity my own case so much, that I would not place the least deserving of mankind in the situation to which you have reduced me ; and though I am under no obligation to show you any tenderness, I could not bring myself to exercise so cruel a vengeance even upon you, should it, from any unforeseen change, ever be in my power. I even now seek excuses for your conduct ; for I feel too well that a nun cannot appear so interesting to you as another : yet, me

thinks, if the heart left reason a choice, your sex would rather be attached to them than to other women ; they have nothing to prevent them from surrendering their whole souls to the delicious impression of love ; the numerous objects which attract female attention in the intercourse with the world have no power over them ; they are secluded from all those scenes which please the fancy and vitiate the heart ; they dwell only on the idea of their love. I often fancy that it must be displeasing to a lover, to see her in whom his happiness is centered perpetually occupied with trifles. How can he suffer her, without being driven to despair, to be continually talking of ables, assemblies, operas, walks, dresses ? perpetually exposed to fresh causes of jealousy. Then they are obliged to interchange the reciprocities of politeness, of complaisance, and conversation ; and what lover can feel assured that they do not enjoy amusement, I will not say pleasure, on those occasions ? Oh ! they ought to relinquish a lover who is not credulous and unsuspecting as a child, and who cannot, without hesitation, credit all they tell him, and who cannot

see them, without emotions, flirt with every one who addresses.

But I have no intention of proving to you, by a chain of reasoning, that you ought to love me.—that would be a very poor method ; and besides, I have employed much better ones which have failed. I know too well my destiny to endeavour to surmount it. I shall be unhappy to my latest hour ; was I not so even when I saw you every day ? I used to be dying with alarm lest you should prove unfaithful ; I wished to see you every moment, though I knew it was impossible ; I was terrified with the danger you run in entering the convent ; I was driven to despair when you were with the army ; I was miserable in thinking that I was not more beautiful and more worthy of you ; I was angry with fate for placing me in the middle ranks of life, and I often thought that the attachment you appeared to have for me might prove prejudicial to your fortune ; I thought that I could not love you sufficiently on your account ; I dreaded the anger of my friends, and I was indeed as miserable as I am now.

If you had given me any proofs of your passion after you left Portugal, I would have exerted every effort to leave it too ; I would have disguised myself, and wandered until I had found you ; but alas ! what would have become of me if you had deserted me in France ? Laden with disgrace, myself and my family covered with shame, who, since you no longer love me, have become more dear to me than before.

You perceive that I can coolly reflect that I might have been in a more miserable situation than I even am now ; that I can speak to you at last rationally for once in my life. Whether this moderation may please you, and make you feel better satisfied with me, I wish not to know, I have already entreated you to write to me no more, and I earnestly repeat the entreaty.

Have you never reflected on your unworthy treatment of me ? Do you never think that you owe more to me than all the world besides ? I have loved you madly ; for your sake, how have I condemned everything else. —You have not acted like a man of honour. You must, from the first, have had a natural

aversion for me, since my passion has failed to excite in you a love equally desperate. I have suffered myself to grow enamoured of very common attractions.—What sacrifices have you made for me ? Have you not been constantly in search of a thousand amusements ? Have you renounced the sports of the town or of the country ? Were you not the first to join the army, and are you not the last to return ? You wanted only to expose your person, although I conjured you for my sake to be careful of yourself. You have not endeavoured to establish yourself in Portugal, where you are so beloved ; one letter from your brother drew you from me, you hesitated not a moment :—and I do not know that, during the whole voyage, your cheerfulness never forsook you ?

It must be confessed that I have cause to hate you mortally. And I have myself been the cause of my own misfortunes ; my love was sincere as it was ardent ! had I been less sincere you would have loved me more : to excite an ardent passion required greater address, and love alone is not sufficient to create love. You wished that I should love you ; and when you

had formed the design, you left no means untried to accomplish it; you would have even resolved to love me yourself and formed the design, had that been necessary; but you found that without feeling any love yourself, you could succeed in your enterprise. What perfidy! Do you think this treachery shall pass unpunished? Should any chance bring you again into this country, I tell you that I would deliver you up to the vengeance of my family.

I have long abandoned myself to an idolatry which now fills me with horror; and my remorse haunts me incessantly. I am feelingly alive to the shame of the crime which you have made me commit, and alas! passion no longer blinds me to their enormity. When will my heart cease to be agonized? When shall I be delivered from this miserable situation? Still I think that I wish you no evil, and that I could be pleased to see you happy. But if you have a heart, can you be so?

I should like to write you another letter, to let you see that I shall in time, perhaps, regain my tranquility. What pleasure will it be to me when I can reproach you with your injurious conduct, and feel it no longer; when I



can let you see that I despise you, that I can speak with cool indifference of your treachery, that I have forgotten my sorrows, that I remember you no more than I wish you to remember me.

I allow that you have great advantage over me, you have inspired me with a passion which has deprived me of my reason; but you have no reason to be vain on that account. I was young, I was credulous; I had immured from my infancy in a convent, I had seen none but disagreeable person; I had never before heard the sound of flattery, which you incessantly applied. I thought these charms and that beauty which you had found in me, and which you made me perceive for the first time myself, were justly yours: I heard you well spoken of: all the world spoke in your favour; you practised every deception to make me love you; but I am at length awakened from the enchantment; you have assisted to break the charm, and I confess that your assistance was required.

In returning your letters, I have attentively persued the last two which you wrote me, and I have read them much oftener than I have

your first letters, to prevent a relapse into my former follies—Ah! how much it cost me: and how happy I should have been if you would have allowed me to love you always! I feel that I am still too much engrossed by my injuries and your infidelities; but remember I have determined to regain a more tranquil state: this I will obtain, or release myself at once by some extremity, which you perhaps would learn without much sorrow. But I wish nothing more of you; I am an idiot to repeat the same thing so often: I must resign you, and think no more of you; I believe too I must write to you no more—Am I obliged to render you an account of all my feelings?—I fear I am. Adieu.

# **SARAH BERNHARDT'S LETTERS TO PETER BERTON.**

## **INTRODUCTION.**

Sarah Bernhardt was the most famous actress of the nineteenth century. Her origin was humble, but she rose swiftly to fame and fortune, by her great talents and artistic achievements. Though she was so welknown in Europe and America, and had written her own memoirs, yet her birthplace, parentage and such other details of her life are not known with certainty. It is said that her mother was a jewess and father a Spanish sailor. Sarah herself did not know who her father was. In her "Memoirs" she has told the story of the inner 'I'—of its sensations, sorrows, joy and griefs—but she has not revealed the secrets that made her a bankrupt on one hand and a mother of illegitimate children on the other. So much scandal was connected with the intimate facts of her life, that it is no wonder that she intentionally kept them shrouded in mystery.

Sarah was a bundle of inconsistencies.

She was at once gentle and cruel. In her younger years, she was described by the servants and stage-attendants as a 'cyclone' and feared as a ferocious beast.

No woman has written so many love-letters as Sarah has. She turned them out wholesale. Once, in later years, when questioned on the authenticity of some letters to Berton, she proudly confessed, "They come from the depths of me that are to be sounded no more. Little did I think when I wrote those letters that they would one day become public. What one does in twilight in silence must one day be proclaimed from the housetops in the light of dawn." She says, she would write whether she had anything to write or not, because, "If men and women waited until they loved each other before getting married, the clergyman would all be bankrupt, and so with the writing of letters, if we waited until we had something to say, before writing, the government would not greatly profit by the income from the Postal department."

In Sarah Bernhardt's resplendent life there were three turning points that moulded her and went further than any thing else towards

making her the immortal woman that she was. One was her love affair with Pierre Berton, author of "Zaza", another was her love affair with Victorien Sardou, author of "The Odora", "Fedora", and many other important French plays, and the third was her friendship with Oscar Wilde, the most gifted of the three.

In 1882 she married a Greek sculptor, Jacques Damala, and after eight months she sought the divorce. For her, "Marriage is, at best, only a friendship sanctioned by the Police." Her views on love are more loose. "Friendship—Love if thou preferrest—with a married woman is full of advantages and allurements for men, for they are spared the fear of matrimony at the end. It is a free lunch, with free music and wine: there is nothing to pay and it is just as good as one could get elsewhere for pieces of gold." In another letter she writes to Sardou, "It is false and wrong for thee to assume that simply because I am married to another, I am less thine than before. I am wholly thine."

She was eighty when she died. Here in these faded pages you would find the history

of a long romance. Most of the letters that are included in this volume are those written to Peter Berton. Times permitting we would present to you, our loved readers, her other passionate letters to Sardou, in another volume.

## LETTERS.

Dear Peter :

I fancy that we have reached the ultimate cross roads which wait, as one in ambush, along the way of every ill-fated friendship such as I am sadly forced to recognize in ours. It is useless to consider an attempt to mend things. Our friendship was a love also, and for the very reason of its spirituality and exultation, it is irreparable, falling as it does, by the law that holds extremes in its custody, to the profoundest depth.

“Friendships may be mended when they have been broken, perhaps loves never. I would prefer to never see thee again, now that our love is dead. Never come near me and I will never cross thy way ; we will carry the sweet memories of all that we were to each other when life and love were new ; we will put them away like so many pearls or opals in the treasure-box of the heart, and we will not desecrate them by contrasting them to the shattered and sham realities of which they are the echoes and shades.

“I remember so well the young years

before I had learned my lesson ; I had then an inordinate pleasure in looking upon corpses. I even sought admission to the morgue under the pretext of thinking that someone whose body had been recovered from the Seine, and advertised by a sensational story in the papers, was one of my skin. I was questioned a little, then admitted, and I treasured that moment for years as one of my life's most precious.

“ In these cases, cases where I was not acquainted with the people concerned, it made little difference. But in cases where I knew some one in actual life the effect was ghastly. The moment in which I gazed on them dead effaced the entire period of them in life, as it had been in memory. I saw my mother in the repose of death and it destroyed all the dear pictures of her which would have hung, ordinarily, forever in mind.

“ We must hold what we have left of lovely memories, sacred, apart, we must not come face to face and see their corpses. We must meet through them only ; then we will be always what we were in those radiant days. Thou canst forget so soon. Of all of



the gifts of men, oblivion and the capacity to forget are most considerable. He has them abundantly, just as woman has her tears.

“Marceline Valmore has a line. ‘*Les fleurs sont pour l’ enfant le sel est pour la femme.*’ In *La Legende des Sicles*, Victor Hugo wrote of disappearance as being the one thing which man had never been able to achieve. He told me later when he brought the original manuscript of it to me as a gift, that it was the one thing which woman had never been able to achieve. I remember his words so well. “Napoleon said that to conquer was to replace,” he said. “Woman has the capacity to love but once, it is true whereas man,”—no, he certainly did not say that he loved many times—“hasn’t the capacity to love at all.”

“So it goes, Peter: it is all of the past now. Even could I regret anything, I would regret nothing, now.

“I gave myself to thee unreservedly during a far longer time than I ever thought of giving myself to anyone in all my life. So faithful I was to thee that narrow-minded lookers-on might have fancied us married !

“ And those years were the petals and the pollen of me. You came into a garden that was in full bloom, and lay under the fragrant boughs and blossoms intoxicated by their heavy incense. And, now thy path lies here, and mine goes there, apart.

“ Love is a vase, which, when it is flawed by heat, or violence or even by accident, may as well be broken at once. We can never trust it after. The more shapely and decorative it was, the more convinced are we on discerning the hopelessness of restoring it to its onetime state. Rough stones, when they are fractured, may be cemented again ; precious ones never.

“ *Sarah* ”.

My tall Incense-Bearer :

“ Where art thou tonight ? Into whose weary world is thy perfume being swung ? Whose bare fields are being turned into Arabia by the sweet breath of my love whose rhythmic breathing is like the swaying

of so many full flowering lilac trees in the wind? Who is biting thy little ears in ivory and pearl and caressing thy superb and incomparable hands and hair?

“ I can but sadly conjecture about all these things. I would so love to believe that thou hadst spoken the truth always to me and that during our enforced separation thou wert mine no less than when my arms locked thee in a mad embrace. Thou art ever with me in a way. Thy photograph is ever before me and I grow mad with the world at times, reflecting that it is with thee that I would be and that it is far from thee that I find myself.

“ Always thou lookest out from a little brown frame, smiling as thou canst smile so entrancingly for thy Sarah and alas for others and all whom thou wouldst captivate and hold beneath thy spell. I fix my hair as thou hast always liked it most. I put on my head the wreaths that thou gavest me, and in my corsage the red and purple petals of thy desire. And I beg thee, sobbingly, to be faithful to thy Sarah.

“ What shall I tell thee? Thou who art

there in the charm and color of Paris ; I who am temporarily interred among uncountable cabbage-wearing, onion-smelling peasants.

“ Love united David and Jonathan. Love still unites men, I believe, but only scandals and panics can unite two women.

“ Write every day to thy Sarah, who loves thee much and madly.”

“ My dear Peter :

“ It is late ; through my open windows comes the perfume of wet leaves smelling as they smell only in the hours of dawn. But I will not lay me down before writing something to the one flower in my garden. Thou knowest well that thou art the only one, dost thou not ? I will not lay me down for the luxury of slumber before telling thee some things which, whether thou has need to know or not will give me joy ; for then, having dedicated this hour to thee beforehand, it will seem as if we had shared it, I mean. And I want to share everything together except sorrow and bad things, and I want

to bear them myself. I want to come between thee and thy rough winds and the harsh voices, between thee and all the enemies of one's desires. I would be the breaker of the ways, and go ahead to prepare thy way, felling the great trees, rolling the stones away, putting the thorns aside and leaving thee a pleasant path. Thy feet were made, my love, but to walk upon hearts. And I would call out from where I was after making the path safe, and I would put my heart out that thou couldst walk upon it and come to me. It is by my heart that I would have thee come to me. And then I would be the wind that fans one's cheek, and kiss thee with a breath that held the sweetness of all the flowers that I had touched in my passage. Most of all would I be the wind that blows over one's footsteps, and covers them up that none may track one. After all, if I could not in a sense be thy protector, and make thee feel dependent on me, I would have a feeble claim to thy reciprocated love. Thou canst surely have confidence in me always and lean upon me as a rock. Thou couldst surely have the security I mean ;

I would not make thy resting place hard in any other way.

“Why do I write such things? I know that thou wilt wonder and ask thyself the question. Well, little flower, thou hast often declared that my love was but a vulgar love ‘physical’ entirely. All love that has to do with such as us is physical. They are deep loves, and withstand time and all the waves that beat eternally against them; I do not know what more thou couldst wish. The only love which one would term spiritual would be such unions as might be contracted in another sphere, where only the spirit would be concerned. Here in this desert waste, so like a state of chaos is it all, so primitive are all the implements with which one sets out to win, so futile are all the weapons with which one defends one’s self, that I think the needs of the body are alone sufficient to take up all of one’s time here. The needs of the body demand all of one’s time. In the great scheme of things, surely there are higher planes, loftier states of being, before we are brought to face the Almighty. This can be but one of the transitional moments in the evolution of the life that has been imagined

in the powerful and infinite dream from which it all had its origin. The soul has no facilities here, no commodities of any kind. Instead there is every obstacle in the way. The soul comes into this world unarmed, and when circumstances arrive, and they arrive always at the very hour of birth, and gag and blindfold it, it is defenceless and afraid. I rather fancy the that soul leaves the body then. It lurks about, abiding, perhaps, in one's shadow, and at the moment of death returns to its old dwelling and accompanies it just until another life is begun. The warmth is the veins, the red that makes music is the body, the heart, the eyes, assuredly these are not the soul. If, as the poets have it, the eye is the window of the soul, it must be admitted that the outlook on which the soul's windows give is sufficient to drive it back to a hiding place, if it has the faculties with which it is believed to be endowed. I believe that before *la fin des fins* there will be an existence far different from this. Justice would require it. And there is justice in this great scheme. I am sure of it. To punish us for not living or loving spiritually in this world would be like punishing a child

whom one had sent into the wilderness unarmed, for not returning with game. It can not be. It can not. This old world does not really exist yet. The orbs that we see about us are but neighbor-thoughts in the cells of the Great Poet's mind. We are but a thought that is being evolved in His subconscious mind. Just as an author who writes great books plans every detail of them before he puts them into the hands of the publisher, revising, testing, experimenting, and finally, when all has been found to be good, put into reality and finished form. He is modeling us. We have heard from His supposed voice. "The works of the Almighty shall stand." I believe it. But the works here do not stand, where is the one-time glorious Chaldea? What but ashes remain of what was Babylon? What more is there of Nineveh and Damascus? We are builders of ruins. How could the soul learn the lesson of constancy when change is the one thing it is eternally taught? This is but a try-out performance, dear old thing, and I pity those who treat it too seriously. We have the Bible and other undoubted truths, but in the rehearsals it just became overheard by us, and belongs



to one of the subsequent acts. We overhear the Folk in the other cells ; our neighbours talk at the top of their voices sometimes and the walls are thin and there are moments when the voice carries better than at others.

“ I wrote until the sun was risen and made my eyes sore, and went to bed. I will not reread my letter. To begin with, I am confident that I would not be able to catch up the same thread again, or recapture the mood I was in. So I will not read it and upset myself with the thought that my letter is incomplete or inconsistent. Do not use the word ‘ physical ’ to me again, that is all. It was really to say that I was paving the way. Anything that was not physical in this life would be tragically out of place. And anybody who tries to go beyond what is physical will be throwing away so many of his days into the waste-paper basket. I know that it is physical. I admit it, but that does not alter the truth or the value either of the fact that I love thee. Now, why, where and so forth are not requisite. Leave out the adverbs. They are for such boring people as emaciated and matter of fact

old maids, or greasy politicians who hide their sins under their statistics, or novelists that try to excite one and make one's heart go pit-a-pat by idealizing the commonplace and explaining away whatever they touch with so much precision ; they are not for the music and rapture of such lips as thine.

“ Do not tell me what I know. Do not tell me that two and two make four. I might answer, ‘ Yes, and four and four make eight.’ I love thee. And if thou canst not love me in return, I ask but tolerance from thee. Let me but love thee. And if thou lovest me, love me ‘ physically ’ ; it is all that I ask. I will be asking no more of thee than I am, according to thy admission, giving thee. Put my love to whatever test thou wishest. Thou wilt wonder why I have elected to write this instead of giving it to thee *de vive voix* when we meet tonight. Ah. love ! I have more to tell thee than I can say in the all too brief and infrequent occasions when we are together for long, so I tell thee then all that I can, and write thee what I have been unable to say. And then thou canst not keep my voice with thee,

whereas thou canst carry the letter, and read it a thousand times, and refer to it when thou wishest. Yes, thou art coming to thy Sarah tonight, and put thy hand against her as would a tired child seeking solace at the lap of its mother. And Sarah will love thee as fondly and plant unnumbered kisses on thy eyes and watch them break into bloom. Perhaps it is too much to expect that thou shouldst love me. I am worthy of tolerance and compassion only. They are the supremest virtues, for without them no other virtue can be permanent or be counted an asset to one's character. Good women are unlovable and bad women are unloved. That is the only difference that I have been able to discern between good and bad women.

“Thine through rainbow and rain,

“*Sarah*”

\* \* \* \*

My most wonderful lover :

“Why didst thou not come last night ?  
I went there and waited on the terrace from

seven until after nine. I expected some people here at the house at nine thirty and had to come in, but I left a note explaining it all for you with the man on the door there. There was nothing in the house in the way of provisions except some dry cakes and vermouth, so I made my dinner with those, waiting, of course, for thee, hoping that what my appetite had been disappointed of at table it would be able to replace in abundance on thy lips. Sometimes I am forced to think that our love lacks something. Thou art superlatively selfish, for one thing. That I pardon. Thou art terribly wrong about money matters and hast no conception of money's value and mission, of its limitations, of its vulgarity or of the difficulty with which it is generally produced. All this I pardon thee. The thing that I can not pardon is the useless lie. If thou tellest me that thou art going to be at a certain place and at a certain hour, then be there even if thou art forced to make the journey barefoot. Even if thou art forced to pay with thy blood at the toll-gates. I wonder really if this is the 'great love' of which we hear so much. I have

always wanted to think so. I have always thought that, as far as I was concerned it was. I have certainly given thee the best of me, since we first met in the garden, but thou hast not given me the best of thyself at all. A friendship cannot possibly exist without absolute honesty and confidence, and truth between the two concerned. I speak of course, only of such friendship as ours. However bad it is I want to know the truth always. Then there is no chance of being taken unawares, like the rabbit in its nest, when the revelation comes. And a revelation of all comes. The world knows everything in the end, and the most secret of our acts must one day be shouted out from the mountain top.... Yes, I wonder if this is really the one love that we all are entitled to in life.

"I believe confidently that one time in every person's life one comes face to face with one's true love. It must be true. But the circumstances may make or mark that whole possibilities of development. And I know that we are often deceived by shadows, and echoes, and mirages. I pray thee consider all that I

tell thee now in the most serious manner possible, before it is too late. I love thee, Peter, so much that, were I less devoted to my art, my life would have been ruined by thee and would rest in thy hands entirely. It happens, that I have that to fall back upon in any case for a goodly measure of help and consolation. It is not everything. It is certainly not a voice and a warm, beautiful body full of red blood and a love ; but it is a great deal, for as Napoleon said, I have repeated it thee so often, 'To conquer is to replace.' And with an art, if one is sufficiently attached to it, with a strong devotion and a consciousness of knowing it well enough to be able to bend it to one's purpose, one may replace anything.

"I remember being once in Brittany in summer when I lived in an old house on the top of a hill among a grove of tall poplar trees, that were always silver, with their leaves showing their under-side in the light wind. One morning, quite before the time for the sun to arise, there was a sudden flush of light across the north eastern heaven. It had turned rather suddenly warm and I had not slept very

well during the night, so I noticed it, looking from my bed out of the wide, open window. The larks went out into the air and filled the night with the song that they had sung in welcoming the rose-red dawns since their dawns began. Louder and louder they sang. Their very little hearts went out in their notes. And then the light disappeared and they continued to sing in the darkness for perhaps ten minutes. Then they were silent, and when, four or five hours later, the real dawn broke, and the whole visible world became blue and gold they were almost silent. Their little hearts had been broken or else badly bruised, for they are very little creatures, and their hearts are affected by pain that is little in proportion. And if this is not really love that I have found now in thee, Peter, I will be disqualified to love when the other occasions present themselves. My confidence ransacked, my body but a shadow of its one-time self, my sight worn out or hopelessly impaired by so many optical deceptions and illusions, I will be unable to attempt anything again. Adventure for a day would be easy, but someone who is going to be always there to fall back upon is what I want in thee.

"The others who came into my life are but to give me a passing thrill; they are but the showers of April, whilst thou art the seven seas. Thou wilt assuredly find no one else in all thy life, however, long, who will love thee more than thy Sarah. She is ever happy to do anything in the world, which it is possible for her to do, for thee. Has she ever failed thee yet? Nor will she ever fail thee in the future. So Peter, think about it all. Do see that this habit of making a rendezvous and not keeping it is wrong, terribly wrong; worse still, seeing that it is one of my dearest friends, if not, indeed, the very best friend, who is made the victim of it. Do not be a false dawn and take for thine own the music that is made for another. I want thee forever; but I want thee to be exact and not treat our meetings with the indifference that characterizes thy attitude so frequently now a days.

"Fondly, and with a great big kiss.

*"Sarah".*



My dear doll,

I am filled with an unutterable sadness tonight, I hardly want to say it, but it is true nevertheless, that I see in our beautiful love certain things that are going to break it up absolutely if we do not make haste to mend them and exercise loving and perpetual care in order to hold everything as it should be. I deserve to have thee all mine if I deserve to have thee at all. I deserve to possess thee unreservedly, or else I am unworthy even to touch thy hand or hear thy voice. Is it not true? Thou knowest that I am not a person who can share with everybody my most precious things. Thou art the only man who I would share absolutely all that I have. With other women I will not share one inch of thee. Thou wilt have to choose between an acceptance, whole heartedly, or else a final and complete rejection. The stories which reach me everyday now expose me to too much embarrassment among my enemies. There must be an immediate end to it. Thou hast heard this same story over and over again and thou mayest think that it is not to be treated more seriously

this time, but I must beg thee to see the thing now as it is, and give up thy association with anyone who could give these reports any more territory. Thou hast promised and promised and promised and promised. I am hurt to see that I cannot have any further confidence in thy word. Thou meanest no harm—at least I do not think so—but thou art not considerate at all of me. After all, what thou givest me is wonderful, surpassingly so, but thou givest me little indeed compared to what I have given thee. Going over my books I am surprised to see that the total sum of all that thou hast cost me during one year exceeds a hundred thousand francs. in cash alone ; and the gifts that I have lavished upon thee, and the expenses I have paid by the thousands when we were together, and of which I have no record, would make a substantial addition to this if they were counted up. I do not wish to remind thee of anything that I have done for thee. Peter ; do not misunderstand. I simply want to show thee that while thou canst be wholly dependent, upon me I have the right to make, certain requests of thee, at least, and expect thee to respect them.

I regret nothing that I have done for thee, to be sure ; I want thee to be always dependent upon me and come to me for whatever thou wishest. I am thy pillow, thy foot-stool, thy easy chair. I want to give thee repose always and comfort thee. I would be happy to be in a position to deprive thee of whatever resources thou hast in order to be thine only fournisseur and force thee to come always to me with thy longings and wishes. But think, Peter dear, is it right that thou shouldst take the money that I give thee and go about throwing it to the winds for the pleasure of other women, while I am working with my whole heart making more for us ? Think of me a little more ; dearest.....

With infinite tenderness.

*"Thy Sarah"*

My precious angel,

"God bless thee my sweet thing ; I will not write very much. The young, stupid

looking ape who brought this (where on earth didst thou find him ?) is downstairs looking at an illustrated paper, gaping like the lazy gorillas do in the long-leaved trees in tropical on long hot days.

"I can do nothing when I am conscious of having someone wait for me to finish doing it. And yet I like to make people wait, too ; now that I come to think about it. I remember once, playing in the United States. The mayor of the town had come to the hotel where we went the first day and asked when the show would begin and when it would end ; I told them to say that it would begin at eight and end shortly after eleven. It was in some small town in a state called Indiana where there was nothing but shortsighted and shorter-minded Protestants. The mayor threw up his hands in horror, saying, "That will never do ; every one here goes to bed every night at ten o'clock at the latest. Do arrange to have the show begin before seven and let it close at ten at the latest." I told them to tell him that it would be done. At fifteen minutes to seven, then, the show

began, and the theater was full. We had had no rehearsals for the change of the program that was due a few days later, and so, for amusement, we rehearsed several plays, and parts of plays, until it was nine. They did not know that it was not the regular program, of course, and were highly attentive. Then, at nine, we began the performance and it ended at twenty minutes after twelve. The curtain fell and there were the wildest cheers for a quarter of an hour, after which the mayor in the name of all present, asked if the whole performance could not be repated. They said that it had been done in great haste and that we had not taken as much time as they had counted upon spending at the theater. Either they had no watches or they had them and did not look at them. I called the company together and asked what they thought of the idea. The manager implor-ed us to do' so. Then I said that we would repeat the performance if they would all pay for it and buy a second ticket. They did it, my dear, and we took advantage of the time in rehearsing again and played until after four in the morning, and when the curtain

fell then there was as much cheering as before.

“ Next day when they found out what they had done they went wild ; I was called immoral for keeping all the respectable church-workers of the community out late at night ; I was leading the world astray, they said. Dost thou like that story ? Now, my dear, as I said, this is not to be any epistle ; I am having those folios carefully wrapped, and if the boy is as intelligent as he certainly does not look, thou wilt have them in good shape . . . . I have been keeping them among the books that I treasure most and they are quite in the condition in which they were when thou gavest them to me. I have slightly rearranged the library, by the way, since thy last visit here. It was just yesterday that I did it. I have put the modern fiction on the shelf with the Holy Bible, in order that the unreadable may keep company with the unread.

“ *Always thy Sarah* ”

My perfect lover,

“ The moment thou left me today I began

crying like a child ; I am sorry for all that I said to thee. It seems to me that scenes of that sort are absolutely unavoidable at times. They come periodically into the life of every woman who loves with her whole self ; days pass calmly along and it seems that the world is but a mass of love and loveliness ; things are heating up gradually the while however and finally with little encouragement, they boil over and make a fearful mess. That is just what happened, Peter my precious thing. I know that men hate scenes and never make them in public places for that reason. Now I went right out in the yard after thou hadst gone and picked up all the things I threw out of the window ; I found both of the shoes and the coat was not damaged in any way. I put it on its hanger and kissed it lovingly and put it back in its place. Now what I want thee to do is to come immediately back here and bring back with thee the things of thine that thou hast carried away. Come away from that vile place at once. The name of the street alone is enough to let whole world know what sort of place it is that thou art living in, and the number tells the side of the street and

confirms whatever they might think.

“Thou art going to make a failure of all that thou dost until thou hast learned to love well, Peter. Only he who loves well can do other things well. I am not moralizing, dearie, but thou art not tolerant enough. The idea of running out of the house in such a rage at four in the morning just because I called thee a few names and threw thy clothes out of the window! I am sorry that it all happened; exceedingly sorry; but I cannot help pointing out very clearly, however, that all that I said was said in all sincerity. Hadst thou never been seen in a public place with that woman and started people talking, I would never have minded it, perhaps, but that is where thou bringest me into it, and that I can not admit. She is conspicuously twice thy age and the world is not a long time coming to its own conclusion about the motive of such an association. I can well understand that it could be to thy advantage to be seen in public with an old lady from time to time; it looks so thoroughly respectable and would unquestionably inspire credit and other commercial confidence, but the old lady



should be one who is elegant and refined, in order to serve this purpose ; she should have white hairs and wear her years as a king wears his purple. She should not be upholstered in reds and greens and try to be kittenish and roll amorous eyes at young men in public places. I believe with all my heart that she is a bad woman, but I did not really want to hurt thee by saying that last night. I did not define for thee the difference between a good and a bad woman—as far as I have been able to observe, the difference is not really very great. Good women look forward to their pasts and bad women look back upon their futures—that is my own idea of the difference between them. So thou canst not say that I said anything terrible after all. Come right back here and we will patch it all up at once.

“In the meantime thy Sarah has tears in her eyes and love in her heart, all on account of thee.

*Sarah.*

Peter, My love :

“ Why can we not be always together ? Why must I open my eyes this morning and find the whole world as desolate as Siberia even though the sun is gold and the sky is blue and lilac and apple blossoms make heavy the air ? I am as weary as the desert wind ; and, without thee, my life seems as purposeless and as vain. There are but ten days between us and our last embrace, but the day seems as remote as do my infant years when Romulus built his wall and I assigned the Parthenon to a hill of ages, and the temples of upper Egypt to side real time. Absence from the multitudes, which would be absence from my art, would be tolerable ; perhap as desirable, even ; but absence from thee is absence from my heart , and I can brave the separation no more. If it is because of bills that thou hast run up there that thou art waiting, and thy creditors will not accept an oral settlement, then I send thee two thousand francs, which I imagine thou wilt be able to use in any case and thou mayest count upon thy Sarah for another

two thousand in a fortnight. Wire me the moment thou receivest this and tell thy Sarah when thou wilt arrive and the things which thou wishest prepared for thy dinner. It is too late for oysters—too early for ortolans; but champagne and the arms of thy Sarah which have eternity for their season, shall be thine abundantly.”

\* \* \* \*

NAWAB SALAR JUNG BAHADUR

Dear Peter,

“.....; and the night comes with breath like kisses, and in her arms are flowers that have every known perfume in their petals. It is like this that thou comest; thou art the bringer of dews and dawns and everything. Thou hast the power to grant the wildest vision of my dreams and desires. And there thou art afar with no one to tuck the covers about thee at nighttime and no one to herald thy mornings with caresses about thy cheeks and brow. No one, at any rate, loves thee as does thy Sarah. It is twilight now. In the wide court beneath my open window the shadows play about like kittens under the

early stars and then creep into their separate corners mysteriously, and crouch there. Uncountable white stars, trembling as if afraid, come into the heavens, millions upon millions, as would so many daisies into the fields if they heard April calling. And to this I add the memory of my love for thee and the world is a poem; unto this I add the sweet consciousness that thou art mine, and the world that has often been but an arid waste assumes all the attributes of a lyrical, love and perfect poem. It seems beyond human understanding that one could be so infinitely enveloped in the life of another. My dear love, my hotel bill is a fortnight past due and I am for the moment in a desperate state of hard-upness; please telegraph me three thousand francs.

Ever thy devoted.

*“Sarah”*



## WILLIAM HAZLITT

My dear Friend,

The important step is taken, and I am virtually a free man .. I am dead to everything but the sense of what I have lost. She was my life—it is gone from me, and I am grown spechral !

If the clock strikes, the sound jars me ; a million of hours will not bring back peace to my breast. The light startles me ; the darkness terrifies me. I seem falling into a pit, without a hand to help me. She has deceived me, and the earth falls from under my feet : no object in nature is substantial, real, but false and hollow, like her faith on which I built my trust. She came (I knew not how) and sat by my side and was folded in my arms, a vision of love and joy and now without any fault of mine but too much fondness, she has vanished from me, and I am left to perish. My heart is torn out of me, with every feeling for which I wished to live. The whole is like a dream, an effect of enchantment ; it torments me, and it drives me mad. I lie down with

it; I rise up with it; and see no chance of repose. I grasp at a shadow, I try to undo the past, and weep with rage and pity over my own weakness and misery. I spared her again and again (fool that I was) thinking what she allowed from me was love, friendship, sweetness, not wantonness. How could I doubt it, looking in her face, and hearing her words, like sighs breathed from the gentlest of all bosoms? I had hopes, I had prospects to come, the flattery of something like fame, a pleasure in writing—health even would have come back with her smile—she has blighted all, turned all to poison and childish tears. Yet the barbed arrow is in my heart I can neither endure it, nor draw it out, for with it flows my life's blood.

The gates of Paradise were at once open to me too, and I blushed to enter but with the golden keys of love! I would die; but her lover—my love of her—ought not to die. When I am dead, who will love her as I have done? If she should be in misfortune, who will comfort her? When she is old, who will look after her, and bless her?

*William Hazlitt*

## JOHN KEATS

To Fanny Brawne.

January 3, 1819.

My dearest Lady;

I am glad I had not an opportunity of ending off a Letter which I wrote for you on Tuesday night—'twas too much like one out of Ro(u)sseau's Heloise. I am more reasonable this morning. The morning is the only proper time for me to write to a beautiful Girl when I love so much ; for at night, when the lonely day has closed, and the lonely, silent, unmusical chamber is waiting to receive me as into a sepulchre, then believe me my passion gets entirely the sway; then I would not have you see those R(h)apsodies which I once thought it impossible I should ever give way to, and which I have often laughed at in another, for fear you should think me either unhappy or perhaps a little mad. I am now at a very pleasant Cottage window, looking out a beautiful hilly country, with a glimpse of sea ; the morning is very fine. I do not know how elastic my spirit might be, what pleasure I might have in living here and breathing



and wandering as free as a stage about this beautiful coast if the remembrance of you did not weigh so upon me. I have never known any unalloyed Happiness for many days together ; the death or sickness of some one has always spoilt my hours—and now when none such troubles oppress me, it is you must confer very hard that another sort of pain should haunt me. Ask yourself my love whether you are not very cruel to have so entrammelled me, so destroyed my freedom. Will you confess this in the letter you must write immediately and do all you can to console me in it—make it rich as a draught of poppies to intoxicate me—write the softest words and kiss them that I may at least touch my lips where yours have been. For myself I know not how to express my devotion to so fair a form : I want a brighter word than bright, a fairer word than fair. I almost wish we were butterflies and lived but three summer days—three such days—with you I could fill with more delight than fifty common years could contain. But however selfish I may feel, I am sure I could never act selfishly ; as I told you a day or two before I left Hampstead.

I will never return to London if my Fate does not run up Pam or at least a Court-card. Though I could centre my happiness in you, I cannot expect to engross your heart so entirely indeed if I thought you felt so much for me as I do for you ; at this moment I do not think I could restrain myself from seeing you again tomorrow for the delight of one embrace. But no—I must live upon hope and chance. In case of the worst that can happen, I shall still love you but what hatred shall I have for another. Some lines I read the other day are continually ringing a peal in my ears .

To see those eyes I prize above mine own  
 Dart favours on another—  
 And those sweet lips (yielding immortal nectar)  
 Be gently press'd by any, but myself—  
 Think, think Francesca, what a cursed thin  
 It were beyond expression.

Do write immediately. There is no post from this place, so you must address Post Office Newport, Isle of Wight. I know before night I shall curse myself for having sent you so cold a letter ; yet it is better to do it

as much in my senses as possible. Be as kind as the distance will permit to your

*J. Keats.*

Present my Compliments to your mother, my love to Margaret and best remembrances to your brother—if you please so.

July 8, 1819.

My sweet Girl,

Your letter gave me more delight, than any thing in the world but yourself could do; indeed I am almost astonished that any absent one should have that luxurious power over my senses which I feel. Even when I am not thinking of you I receive your influence and a tender nature stealing upon me. All my thoughts, my unhappiest days and nights have I find not all cured me of my love of Beauty; but made it so intense that I am miserable that you are not with me: or rather breathe in that dull sort of patience that cannot be called life. I never knew before what such a love as you have made me feel, was; I did not believe in it;

my Fancy was afraid of it, lest it should burn me up. But if you will fully love me, though there may be some fire, 'twill not be more than we can bear when moistened and bedewed with Pleasures; you mention horrid people and ask me whether it depends upon them, whether I see you again. Do understand me, my love, in this. I have so much of you in my heart that I must turn Mentor when I see a chance of harm befalling you. I would never see any thing but Pleasure in your eyes, love on your lips, and Happiness in your steps. I would wish to see you among those amusements suitable to your inclinations and spirits; so that our love might be a delight in the midst of Pleasures agreeable enough, rather than a resource from Vexations and cares. But I doubt much, in case of the worst, whether I shall be philosopher enough to follow my own Lessons; if I say my resolution give you a pain I could not. Why may I not speak of your Beauty, since beginning of such love as I have for you but Beauty. There may be a sort of love for which, without the least sneer at it, I have the highest respect and can admire it in others: but it has not the richness, the bloom, the full form, the enchant-

ment of love after my own heart. So let me speak of you(r) Beauty, though to my own endangering; if you could be so cruel to me as to try elsewhere its Power. You say you are afraid I shall think you do not love me in saying this you make me ache the more to be near you. I am at the diligent use of faculties here, I do not rhyme; and here I must confess, that; (since I am on that subject) I love you the more in that I believe you have liked me for my own sake and for nothing else. I have met with women whom I really think would like to be married to a Poem and to be given away by a Novel. I have seen your comet, and only wish it was signed that poor Rice would get well whose illness makes him rather a melancholy companion: and the more so as to conquer his feelings and hide them from me, with a forced Pun. I kiss'd writing over in the hope you had indulged me by leaving a trace of honey. What was your dream? Tell it to me and I will tell you the interpretation thereof.

*Ever yours, my love,  
John Keats.*

Do not accuse me of delay—we have not here an opportunity of sending letters every day. Write speedily.

*Shanklin.*

15th. July, 1819.

My love,

I have been in so irritable a state of health these two or three last days, that I did not thik I should be able to write this week. Not that I was so ill, but so much so as only to be capable of an unhealthy teasing letter. Tonight I am greatly recovered only to feel the languor I have felt after you touched with ardency. You say you perhaps might have made me better: you would then have made me worse: now you could quite effect a cure: What fee, my sweet Physician, would I not give you to do so. Do not call it folly, when I tell you I took your letter last night to bed with me. In the morning I found your name on the sealing wax obliterated. I was started at the bad omen till I recollected that it must

have happened in my dreams, and they you know fall out by contraies. You must have found out by this time I am little given to bode ill like the raven ; it is my misfortune not my fault ; it has proceeded from the general tenor of the circumstances of my life, and rendered every event suspicious. However I will not more trouble either you or myself with sad Prophecies ; though so far I am pleased at it as it has given me opportunity to love your disinterstedness twords me I can be a raven no more, you and pleasure take possession of me at the same moment. I am afraid you have been unwell. If through me illness have touched you (but it must be with a very gentle hand) I must be selfish enough to feel a little glad at it. Will you forgive me this ? I have been reading lately an oriental tale of a very beautiful color—It is of a city of melancholy men, all made so by this circumstance. Through a series of adventures each one of them by turns reach (es) some gradens of Paradise where they meet with a most enchanting Lady ; and just as they are going to embrace her, she bids them

shut their eyes—they shut—them and on opening their eyes again find themselves descending to the earth in a magic basket. The remembrance of this Lady and their delights lost beyond all recovery render them melancholy ever after. How I applied this to you, my dear ; how I palpitated at it ; how the certainty that you were in the same world with myself, and though as beautiful, not so talismanic as that Lady ; how I could not bear you should be so you must believe because I swear it by yourself. I have been, I can not tell why, in capital spirits this last hour. What reason ? When I have to take my candle and retire to a lonely room, without the thought as I fall asleep, of seeing you tomorrow morning ? or the next day, or the next—it takes on the appearance of impossibility and eternity—I will say a month—I will say I will see you in a month at most, though no one but yourself should see me ; if it be but for an hour. I should not like to be so near you as London without being continually with you : after having once more kissed you sweet I would rather be here alone at my task than in the bustle and



hateful literary chitchat.. Meantime you must write to me—as I will every week—for your letters keep me alive. My sweet Girl I cannot speak my love for you. Good night ! and

*Ever yours,  
John Keats.*

Sunday Night.

My sweet Girl,

I have, believe me, not been an age in letting you take possession of me ; the very first week I knew you I wrote myself your vassal ; but burnt the letter as the very next time I saw you I thought you manifested some dislike to me. If you should ever feel for Man at the first sight what I did for you, I am lost. Yet I should not quarrel with you, but hate myself if such a thing were to happen—only I should burst if the thing were not as fine as a Man as you are as a Woman. Perhaps I am too vehement, then fancy me on my knees, especially when I mention a part of your letter which hurt

me ; you say speaking of Mr. Severn ‘ but you must be satisfied in knowing that I admired you much more than your friend’. My dear love, I cannot believe there ever was or ever could be any—thing to admire in me sepecially as far as sight goes—I cannot be admired, I am not a thing to be admired. You are, I love you ; all I can bring you is a swooning admiration of your beauty. I hold that place among Men which snubnosd brunettes with meeting eyebrows do among women—they are trash to me—unless I should find one among them with a fire in her heart like the one that burns in mine. You absorb me in spite of myself—you alone : for I look not forward with any pleasure to what is called being settled in the world ; I tremble at domestic cares—yet for you I would meet them, though if it would leave you the happier I would rather die than do so. I have two luxuries to brood over in my walks, your Loveliness and the hour of my death. O that I could have possession of them both in the same minute. I hate the world : it batters too much the wings of my self-will, and would I could take a sweet poison from

your lips to send me out of it. From no others would I take it, I am indeed astonished to find myself so careless of all charms but yours—remembering as I do the time when even a bit of ribband was a matter of interest with me. What softer words can I find for you after this—what it is I will not read. Nor will I say more here, but in a Postscript answer any thing else you may have mentioned in your letter in so many words—for I am distracted with a thousand thoughts. I will imagine you Venus to night and pray, pray, pray to your star like a He(a) then.

*Yours ever, fair star,  
John Keats*

October 13, 1819

My dearest Girl,

This moment I have set myself to copy some verses out fair. I cannot proceed with any degree of content. I must write you a line or two and see if that will assist in

dismissing you from my Mind for ever so short a time. Upon my Soul I can think of nothing else. The time is passed when I had power to advise and warn you against the uncompromising morning of my Life. *My love has made me selfish.* I cannot exist without you. I am forgetful of every thing but seeing you again—my life seems to stop there—I see no further. You have absorb'd me. I have a sensation at the present moment as though I was dissolving—I should be exquisitely miserable without the hope of soon seeing you. I should be afraid to separate myself far from you. My sweet Fanny, will your heart never change? My love, will it? I have no limit now to my love—your note came in just here—I cannot be happier away from you. 'Tis richer than an Argosy of Pearles. Do not threaten me even in jest. I have been astonished that Men could die Martyrs for religion—I have shuddered at it. I shudder no more. I could be martyr'd for my Religion—Love is my religion—I could die for that. I could die for you. My Creed is Love and you are its only tenet. You have ravish'd me away by a power I cannot

resist ; and yet I could resist till I saw you ; and even since : I have seen you I have endeavoured often ‘to reason against the reasons of my Love’. I can do that no more—the pain would be too great. My love is selfish. I cannot breathe without you.

*Yours for ever*  
*John Keats*

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February 10, 1820

My dearest Girl,

If illness makes such an agreeable variety in the manner of your eyes I should wish you sometimes to be ill. I wish I had read your note before you went last night that I might have assured you how far I was from suspecting any coldness. You had a just right to be a little silent to one who speaks plainly to you. You must believe—you shall, you will—that I can do nothing, say nothing, think nothing of you but what has its spring in Love which has so long been my pleasure and torment. On the night I was

taken ill—When so violent a rush of blood came to my Lungs that I felt nearly suffocated—I assure you I felt it possible I might not survie, and at that moment though (t) of nothing but you. When I said to Brown this is unfortunate I thought of you. ‘Tis true that since the first two or three days other subjects have entered my head. I shall be looking forward to Health and the spring and regular routine of our old walks.

*Yours affectionately*  
J. K.

My sweet love,

I shall wait patiently till to-morrow before I see you, and in the meantime, if there is any need of such a thing, I assure you by your Beauty that whenever I have at any time written on a certain unpleasant subject it nas been with your welfare impressed upon my mind. How hurt I should have been had you ever acceded to what is notwithstanding, very reasonable! How much the more do I love you from the general result! In my present state of Health I feel too

much separated from you and could almost speak to you in the words of Lorenzo's Ghost to Isabella.

Your Beauty grows upon me and I feel  
A greater love through all my essence steel.

My greatest torment since I have known you has been the fear of your being a little inclined to the Cressid; but that suspicion I dismiss entirely and remain happy in the surety of your Love which I assure you is as much a wonder to me as a delight. Send me the words 'Good night' to put under my pillow.

Dearest Fanny,  
Yours affectionate  
J. K.

March, 1820

Sweetest Fanny Fanny,

You fear, sometimes, I do not love you so much as you wish? My dear Girl I love you ever and ever and without reserve. The more I have known you the more have I lov'd. In

every way—even my jealousies have been agonies of Love, in the hottest fit I ever had I would have died for you. I have vex'd you too much but for Love : Can I help it? You are always new. The last of your kisses was ever the sweetest, the smile the brightest, the last movement gracefullest. When you pass'd my window home yesterday, I was fill'd with as much admiration as if I had then seen you for the first time. You uttered a half complaint once that I only lov'd your Beauty. Have I nothing else then to love in you but that? Do not I see a heart naturally furnish'd with wings imprisoned itself with me? No ill prospect has been able to turn your thoughts a moment from me. This perhaps should be as much a subject of sorrow as joy—but I will not talk of that. Even if you did not love me I could help an entire devotion to you: how much more deeply then must I feel for you knowing you love me. My mind has been the most discontented and restless one that ever was put into a body too small for it. I never felt my Mind repose upon anything with complete and undistracted enjoyment—upon no person but you. When you are in the room my thoughts never fly out of



window: you always concentrate my whole senses. The anxiety shown about our Loves in your last note is an immense pleasure to me however you must not suffer such speculations and molest you any more: nor will I any more believe you can have the least pique against me. Brown is gone out- here is Mrs. Wylie- when she is gone I shall be awake for you. Remebrance to your mother.

Yours affectionate  
J. Keats.

My dearest Girl,

I wrote a letter for you yesterday expecting to have seen your mother. I shall be selfish enough to send it though I know it may give you a little pain, because I wish you to see how unhappy I am for love of you, and endeavour as much as I can to entice you to give up your whole heart to me whose whole existence hangs upon you. You could not step or move an eyelid but it would shoot to my heart—I am greedy

of you. Do not think of any thing but me. Do not live as if I was not existing—Do not forget me—But have I any right to say you forget me. Perhaps you think of me all day. Have I any right to wish you to be unhappy for me? You would forgive me for wishing it, if you knew the extreme passion I have that you should love me—and for you to love me as I do you, you must think of no one but me, much less write that sentence. Yesterday and this morning I have been haunted with a sweet vision—I have seen you the whole time in shepherdess dress. How my senses have ached at it. How my heart has been devoted to it. How my eyes have been full of tears at it! I (N)eed I think a roll love is enough to occupy the widest heart—Your going to town alone, when I heard of tears at it was a shock to me—yet I expected it ; promise me you will not for some time, till I get better. Promise me this and fill the paper full of the most endearing names. If you cannot do so with good, do my Love tell me—say what you think—confess if your heart is too much fasten'd on the world. Perhaps then I may see you at a greater distance, I may not be able to appropriate

you so closely to myself. Were you to loose a favourite bird from the cage, how would your eyes ache after it as long as it was in sight ; when out of sight you would recover a little. Perhaps if you would, if so it is, confess to me how many things are necessary to you besides me, I might be happier, by being less tantaliz'd. Well may you explain, how selfish, how cruel, not to let me enjoy my youth, to wish me to be unhappy. You must be so if you love me—upon my Soul I can be contented with nothing else. If you could really what is called enjoy yourself at a Party—if you can smile in peoples faces, and wish them to admire you now ; you never have nor ever will love me. I see life in nothing but the certainty of your Love—convince me of it my sweetest. If I am not somehow convinced I shall die of agony. If we love we must not live as other men and women do. I cannot brook the wolf's bone of fashion and foppery and tattle. You must be mine to die upon the rack if I want you. I do not pretend to say I have more feeling—than my fellows—but I wish you to seriously look over letters kind and unkind and codsider

whether the Person who wrote them can be able to endure much longer the agonies and uncertainties which you are so peculiarly made to create—My recovery of bodily health will be of no benefit to me if you are not all mine when I am well. For God's sake save me—or tell me my passion is of too awful a nature for you. Again God bless you. No—my sweet Fanny—I am wrong. I do not want you to be unhappy and yet I do, I must while there is so sweet a Beauty—my loveliest, my darling ! Good bye! I kiss you—O the torments!

My dearest Fanny,

My head is puzzled this morning, and I scarce know what I shall say though I am full of a hundred things. 'Tis certain I would rather be writing to you this morning, notwithstanding the alloy of grief in such an occupation, than enjoy and other pleasure, with health to boot, unconnected with you. Upon my soul I have loved you to the extreme. I wish you could know the tenderness with which I continually brood over

your different aspects of countenance, action, and dress. I see you come down in the morning ; I see you meet me at the Window—I see every thing over again eternally that I ever have seen. If I get on the pleasant clue I love in a sort of happy misery, if on the unpleasant, 'tis miserable misery. You complain of my ill treating you in word, thought and deed—I am sorry,—my excuse is that those words have been wrung from me by the sharpness of my feelings. At all events and in any case I have been wrong ; could I believe that I did it without any cause, I should be the most sincere of Penitents. I could give way to my repentant feelings now, I could resent all my suspicions, I could mingle with you heart and Soul, though absent, were it not for some parts of your Letters. Do you suppose it possible I could ever leave you ? You know what I think of myself and what of you. You know that I should feel how much it was my loss and how little yours. My friends laugh at you : I know some of them. When I know them all I shall never think of them again as friends or even acquaintance. My friends

have behaved well to me in every instance but one, and there they have become tellers, and inquisitors into my conduct : spying upon a secret I would rather die than share it with any body's confidence. For this I cannot wish them well, I care not see any of them again. If I am the Theme, I will not be the the Friend of idle Gossips. Good gods what a shame it is our Loves should be so put into the microscope of a Coterie. Their laughs should not affect you (I may perhaps give you reasons some day for these laughs, for I suspect a few people to hate me well enough, for reasons I know of, who have pretended a great friendship for me) when in competition with one, who if he never should see you again would make you the Saint of his memory. These Laughers, who do not like you, who envy you for your Beauty, who would have God—bless'd me from you for ever : who were plying me with disencouragements with respect to you eternally. People are revengeful do not mind them—do nothing but love—if I knew that for certain life and health will in such event be a heaven, and death itself will be less

painful. I long to believe in immortality. I shall never be able to bid you an entire farewell. If I am destined to be happy with you here—how short is the longest Life. I wish to believe in immortality—I wish to live with you for ever. Do not let my name ever pass between you and these laughers, if I have no other merit than the great love for you, that were sufficient to keep me sacred and unmentioned in such Society. If I have been cruel and unjust I swear my love has ever been greater than my cruelty which last(s) but a minute where as my Love come what will shall last for ever. If concession to me has hurt your Pride God, knows I have had little pride in my head when thinking of you. Your name never passes my lips—do not let mine pass yours—Those People do not like me. After reading my Letter you even part but I dare not. I shall feel so much pain in parting with you again. My dearest love, I am afraid to see you, I am strong but not strong enough to see you. Will my arm be ever round you again. And if so shall I be obliged to leave you again. My sweet Love : I am happy whilst I believe your first Letter. Let

me be but certain that you are mine heart and soul and I could die more happily than I could otherwise live. If you think me cruel—if you think I have sleighted you—is true and truth's simplicity and simpler than the intensity of truth's I think I once said before how could I slight you ? How threaten to leave you ? not in the spirit a Threat to you—no—but in the spirit of Wretchedness in myself. My fairest, my clicious, my angel faimy : do not believe me such a vulgar fellow. I will be as patient in illness and as believing in Love as I am able.

*Yours for ever my dearest  
John Keats*

August, 1820.

I do not write this till the last  
that no eye may catch it,

My dearest Girl,

I wish you could invent some means to make me at all happy without you. Every hour I am more and more concentrated in



you ; every thing else tastes like chaff in my Mouth. I feel it almost impossible to go to Italy—the fact is I cannot leave you, and shall taste one minute's content until it pleases chance to let me live with you for good. But I will not go on at this rate. A person in health as you are can have no conception of the horrors that nerves and a temper like mine go through. What Island do your friends propose retiring to ? I should be happy to go with you there alone, but in company I should object to it ; the backbitings and jealousies of new colonists who have nothing else to amuse themselves, as unbearable. If I cannot live with you I will live alone. I do not think my health will improve much while I am separated from you. For all this I am averse to seeing you—I cannot bear flashes of light and return into my gloom again. I am not so unhappy now as I should be if I had seen you yesterday. To be happy with you seems such an impossibility ! it requires a luckier Star than mine ! it will never be. I enclose a passage from one of your letters which I want you to alter a little—I want (if you

will have it so) the matter express'd less coldly to me. If my health would bear it, I could write a Poem which I have in my head, which would be a consolation for people in such a situation as mine. I would show some one in Love as I am with a person living in such Liberty as you do. Shakespeare always sums up matters in the most sovereign manner. Hamlet's heart was full of such Misery as mine is when he said to Ophelia "Go to a Nunnery, go, go!" Indeed I should like to give up the matter at once—I should like to die. I am sickened at the brute world which you are smiling with. I hate men and women more. I see nothing but thorns for the future—wherever I may be next winter in Italy or nowhere Brown be living near you with his indecencies—I see no prospect of any rest. Suppose me in Rome—well, I should there see you as in a magic glass going to and from town at all hours,—I wish you could infuse a little confidence in human nature into my heart. I cannot muster any ——— the world is too brutal for me—I am glad there is such a thing as the grave—I am sure I shall never

have any rest till I get there. At my rate I will indulge myself by never seeing any more Dilke or Brown or any of their Friends. I wish I was either in your arms full of faith or that a Thunder bolt would strike me.

Good bless you.

*J. Keats.*

## ROBERT BURNS

(This and the next two form the earliest letters of the poet that have been preserved Miss Begbie was the heroine of the song "On Cessnock Banks." She refused to marry Burns, because, ere she formed his acquaintance, her heart had been given to another.)

To Miss Elison or Alison Begbie

My dear E.;

NAWAB SALAR JUNG BAHADUR

I do not remember in the course of your acquaintance and mine ever to have heard your opinion on the ordinary way of falling in love amongst people of our station in life : I do not mean the persons who proceed in the way of bargain; but those whose affection is really placed on the person.

Though I be, as you know very well, but a very awkward lover myself, yet as I have some opportunities of observing the conduct of other who are much better skilled in the affair of courtship than I am, I think it is owing to lucky chance more than to good management, that there are not more unhappy marriages than usually are.

It is natural for a young fellow to like the acquaintance of the females, and customary for him to keep the company when occasion serves : some one of them is more agreeable to him than the rest; there is something, he knows not what, pleases him, he knows not how, in her company. This I take to be what is called love with the greater part of us ; and I must own, my dear E., it is a hard game such a one as you have to play, when you meet with such a lover. You cannot refuse but he is sincere, and yet, though you use him ever so favourably, perhaps in a few months, or at furthest in fond of another; whilst you are quite forgot. I am aware that perhaps the next time I have the pleasure of seeing you, you may bid me take my lesson home, and tell me that the passion I have professed for you is perhaps one of those transient flashes I have been describing ; but I hope, my dear E., you will do me the justice to believe me, when I assure you the love I have for you is founded on the sacred principles of virtue and honour, and by consequence, so long as you continue possessed of those amiable qualities which first inspired my passion for you, so long must I continue to love

you. Believe me, my dear, it is love like this alone, which can render the marriage, state happy. People may talk of flames and raptures as long as they please, and a warm fancy, with a flow of youthful spirits, may make them feel something like what they describe ; but sure I am the nobler faculties of mind; with kindred feelings of the heart, can only be the foundation of friendship, and it has always been my opinion that the married life was only friendship in a more exalted degree.

If you be so good as to grant my wishes, and it shall please Providence to spare us to the latest period of life, I can look forward and see that even then, though bent down with wrinkled age—even then when all other wordly circumstances will be indifferent to me—I will regard my E., with the tenderest affection ; and for this plain reason, because she is still possessed of these noble qualities, improved to a much higher degree, which first inspired my affection for her.

“O happy state when souls each other draw,  
When love is liberty, and nature law.”

I know, were I to speak in such a style to

many a girl, who thinks herself possessed of of no small share of sense, she would think it ridiculous ; but the language of the heart is, my dear E., the only courtship I shall ever use to you.

When I look over what I have written, I am sensible it is vastly different from the ordinary style of courtship, but I shall make no apology—I know your good nature will excuse what your good sense may see amiss..... R. B.

My dear E.,

I verily believe my dear E., that the pure genuine feelings of love are as rare in the world as the pure, genuine principles of virtue and piety. This I hope will account for the uncommon style for all my letters to you. By uncommon I mean their being written in such a serious manner, which to tell you the truth, has made me often afraid lest you should take me for some zealous bigot, who conversed with his mistress as he would converse with his minister.

I don't know how it is, my dear ; for though, except your company, there is nothing on earth gives me so much pleasure as writing to you, yes it never gives me those giddy raptures so much talked of among lovers. I have often thought that if a well grounded affection be not really part of virtue, it is something extremely akin it. Whenever the thought of my E., warms my heart, every feeling of humanity every principle of generosity kindles in my breast. It extinguishes every dirty spark of malice and envy which are but too apt to infest me. I grasp every creature in the arms of universal benevolence, and equally participate in the pleasures of the happy, and sympathise with the miseries of the unfortunate. I assure you, my dear, I often look up to the divine disposer of events with an eye of gratitude for the blessing which I hope He intends to bestow upon me in bestowing you. I sincerely wish that He may bless my endeavours to make your life as comfortable and happy as possible, both in sweetening the rougher parts of my natural temper, and bettering the unkindly circumstances of my fortune. This, my dear,



is a passion, at least in my view, worthy of a man, and I will add worthy of a christian. The sordid earthworm may profess love to a woman's person, whilst in reality his affection centred in her pocket : and the slavish grudge may go on wooing as he goes to the horse market to choose one who is stout and firm, and, as we may say of an old horse, one who would be a good drudge and draw kindly. I disdain their dirty punny ideas. I would be heartily out of humour with myself, if I thought I were capable of having so poor a notion of the sex, which were designed to crown the pleasures of society. Poor devils : I don't envy them their happiness who have such notions. For my part, I, propose quite other pleasures with my dear parner.....R. B.

My dear E.,

I have often thought it a peculiarly unlucky circumstance in love, that though in every other situation in life telling the truth is not only the safest, but actually by far the

easiest way of proceeding, a lover is never under a greater difficulty in acting, or more puzzled for expression, then when his passion is sincere, and his intentions are honourable. I do not think that it is very difficult for a person of ordinary capacity to talk of love and fondness which are not felt, and to make vows of constancy and fidelity which are never intended to be performed, if he be villain enough to practise such detestable conduct : but to a man whose heart glows with the principles of integrity and truth, and who sincerely loves a woman of amiable person, uncommon refinement of sentiment, and purity of manners—to such a one in such circumstances, I can assure you, my dear, from my own feelings at this moment, courtship is a task indeed. There is such a number of foreboding fears, and distrustful anxieties crowded into my mind when I am in your company, or when I sit down to write to you, that what to speak or what to write I am altogether at loss.

There is one rule which I have hitherto practised, and which I shall invariably keep with you, and that is honestly to tell you

the plain truth. There is something so mean and unmanly in the arts of dissimulation and falsehood, that I am surprised they can be acted by anyone in so noble, so generous a passion, as virtuous love. No, my dear E., I shall never endeavour to gain your favour by such detestable practices. If you will be so good and generous as to admit me for your partner, your companion, your bosom friend through life, there is nothing on this side of eternity shall give me greater transport ; but I shall never think of purchasing your hand by any arts unworthy of a man. There is one thing my dear, which I earnestly request of you, and it is this, that you would soon either put an end to my hopes by a peremptory refusal, or cure me of my fears by a generous consent.

It would oblige me much if you will send me a line or two when convenient. I shall only add further that, if a behaviour regulated (though perhaps very imperfectly) by the rules of honour and virtue, if a heart devoted to love and esteem you, and an earnest endeavour to promote your happiness ; if these are the qualities you would wish in

a friend, in a husband, I hope you shall ever find them in your real friend and sincere lover.....R. B.

My dear E.,

I ought in good manners, to have acknowledged the receipt of your letter before this time, but my heart was so shocked with the contents of it, that I can scarcely yet collect my thoughts so as to write you on the subject. I would not attempt to describe what I felt on the receipt of your letter. I read it over and over, again and again, and though it was in the politest of language of refusal, still it was peremptory : “ You were sorry you would not make me a return, but you wish me”, what without you, I never can obtain, “You wish me all kind of happiness”. It would be weak and unmanly to say that without you I never can be happy ; but sure I am, that sharing life with you would have given it relish, that wanting you I can never taste.

Your uncommon personal advantages, and

your superior good sense, do not so much strike me : these, possibly may be met within a few instances in others ; but that amiable goodness, that tender feminine softness, that endearing softness of disposition, with all the the charming offspring of a warm feeling heart—these I never again expect to meet within such a degree in this world. All these charming qualities, heightened by an education much beyond anything I have ever met in any woman I ever dared to approach, have made an impression on my heart that I do not think the world can ever efface. My imagination has fondly flattered myself with a wish—I dare not say, it ever reached a hope—that possibly I might one day call you my own. I had formed the most delightful images, and my fancy fondly brooded over them, but I am now wretched for the loss of what I really had no right to expect. I must now think no more of you as a mistress : still I presume to ask to be admitted as a friend. As such I wish to be allowed to wait on you and as I expect to remove in a few days a little farther off, and you, I suppose, will soon leave this place, I wish to see or hear from you soon, and if an

expression should perhaps escape me rather too warm for the friendship, I hope you will pardon it, my dear miss—(pardon me the dear expression for once).....

R. B.

## NAPOLEON

(Marie Walewska was the young wife of an old Polish noble, whom Napoleon met at a ballet Warsaw, and who soon became his mistress. She was with him again at Finkenste in the same year, at Paris in 1808 and 1810.)

To Madame Marie Walewska

*Warsaw January, 1807*

I saw one but you, I admired no one but you, I want no one but you. Answer me at once, and assuage the impatient passion of  
N.

\* \* \* \*

Didn't you like me, Madame ? I had reason to hope you might. . . . . Or perhaps I was wrong. Whilst my ardour is incre a sing, yours is slackening its pace. You are running my repose ! Ah ! grant a few moments' pleasure and happiness to a poor heart that is only waiting to adore you. Is it so difficult to let me have an answer ? You owe me two.

N.

\* \* \* \*

There are times—I am passing through

one—when hope is as heavy as despair. What can satisfy the needs of a smitten heart, which longs to throw itself at your feet, but is held back by the weight of serious considerations, paralysing its keenest desires? Oh, if only you would.....No one but you can remove the obstacles that keep us apart. My friend Duroc would make it quite easy for you.

Ah! Come! You shall have all you ask. Your country will be dearer to me, once you have had pity on my poor heart.

N.

\* \* \* \*

Marie, my sweet Marie, my first thought is of you, my first is to see you again. You will come again, won't you? You promised you would. If you don't, the eagle will fly to you! I shall see you at dinner—our friend tells me so. I want you to accept this bouquet: I want it to be a secret link, setting up a private understanding between us in the midst of the surrounding crowd. We shall be able to share our thoughts, though all the world is looking on. When my hand presses my heart, you will know



that I am thinking of no one but you, and when you press your bouquet, I shall have your answer back ! Love me, my pretty one, and your bouquet. N.

\* \* \* \*

## JOSEPHINE—SEPARATON

To Citizeness Bonaparte

*Nice, March 31, 1796,*

Not a day passes without my loving you, not a night but I hold you in arms. I cannot drink a cup of tea without cursing the marital ambition that separates me from the soul of life. Whether I am buried in business, or leading my troops, or inspecting the camps, my adorable Josephine fills my mind, takes up all my thoughts, and reigns alone in my heart. If I am torn from you with the swiftness of the rushing Rhone, it is that I may see you again the sooner. If I rise to work at midnight, it is to put forward by a few days my darling's arrival. And yet, in your letter of the 23rd., and again of the 26th. ventose, you call me 'vous' ! VOUS yourself ! Wretch ! How could you ever write such a letter ? How cold it

is ! And then, from the 23rd, to the 26th., four days without a word. What were you doing, not to write to your husband ? . . . Yes, my dear, that VOUS and those four days, make me regret my previous complaisance. Curses on whoever was the cause of it ! May he suffer every pain that I should, had I evidence and proof such as his. There are no such torments in hell ! neither Furies, nor serpent ! VOUS ! VOUS indeed. What would it be a fortnight's time ? . . . My soul is sad ; my heart in chains, and I imagine things that terrify me . . . You do not love me as you did ; you will console yourself elsewhere. One day you will love me no more ; tell me so, then I shall at least know how to deserve the misfortune . . . Good-bye, my wife, my tormentor, my happiness, the hope and soul of my life, whom I love, whom I fear, the source of feelings which make me as gentle as Nature herself, and of impulses under which I am as catastrophic as a thunder-bolt. I do not ask you to love for ever, or to be faithful to me, but simply . . . to tell me the truth, to be entirely frank with me. The day on which you say to me 'I Love you

less', will be the last of my love, or of my life. Had I heart so base as to love without return? I would tear it to pieces with my teeth. Josephine! Josephine! Do you remember what I have sometimes said to you—that Nature has made my soul resolute and strong, whilst yours she has constructed of lace and gauze? Do you love me no more? Forgive me, soul of my life. My mind is intent upon vast plans. My heart utterly engrossed with you, has fears that make me miserable.... I am bored, because I cannot be sayin 'Josephine'. I am waiting for you to write.

Good-bye! Ah! If you love me less, it must be that you never loved me at all, were I indeed to be pitied.

*Bonaparte.*

P. S.—The war, this year, is utterly different from what it was. I have given the army meat, bread and forage. My armed cavalry would soon be on march. I cannot tell you how the men trust me. You are my one anxiety, my only pleasure in life, and my only torment. I send a kiss to your children. You never mention them. Begad!

if you did, your letters would be half as long and your early morning visitors would lose the pleasure of your company ! O woman !

(They have been parted less than three weeks.  
Napoleon is on his way to the Italian front.)

## JOSEPHINE, IN ABSENCE

NAWAD SALAR JUNG BANADUR

To Citizeness Bonaparte

*Port Maurice, April 3rd 1796*

I have had all your letters, but none has affected me like the last. Darling, do you think what you are doing, when you write to me in such terms ? Do you suppose my position is not so painful already, that you must pile regret upon regret, and reduce my soul to distraction ? The way you write ! The feelings you describe. They are flames that scorch my poor heart. Away from you, my one and only Josephine, there is no pleasure in life : away from you, the world is desert in which I am all alone, without even the solace of expressing my feelings. You have robbed me of more than my heart ; all my thoughts are about you alone. Whenever I am bored and worried with business, whenever I am troubled as to how

things will turn out, whenever I am disappointed with mankind, and feel inclined to curse the day I was born, I put my hand to my heart : there throbs your likeness ; I have but to look at it, and my love is perfect happiness, and there is pleasure in every prospect but that of long absence from my beloved.

What art did you learn to captivate all my faculties, to absorb all my character into yourself ? It is a devotion, dearest, which will end only with my life. 'He lived for Josephine' ; there is my epitaph. I strive to be near you : I am nearly dead with desire for your presence. It is madness ! I cannot realize that I am getting further and further away from you. So many regions and countries part us asunder ; How long it would be before you read these characters, these imperfect utterances of a troubled heart of which you are queen ! Ah ! wife that I adore. I cannot tell what lot awaits me ; only, that if it keeps me any longer away from you, it will be insupportable, beyond what bravery can bear. There was a time when I prided myself on my courage ; and sometimes, at the sight of misfortunes that fate might have in store for me, I would face in

imagination unheard of ills, without a frown, without a feeling of surprise. But nowadays the mere thought that my Josephine may be unwell, or that she might be taken ill—above all the cruel possibility that she may not love me as she did, wounds my heart, arrests my blood, and makes me so sad and despondent that I am robbed even of the courage of anger and despair.

Once I would tell myself that to die without regret is to be safe from any harm the world can inflict ; but now the thought of dying without the certainty of your love is like the torments of Hell, the very image of annihilation. I experience all the feelings of a drowning man.

My perfect comrade, whom fate has allotted to make life's painful journey at my side ! The day when I lose your heart, Nature will lose for me all her warmth and vegetation. . . . . I cannot go on, dearest ; my soul is so sad, my mind overburdened, my body tired out. Men bore me. I could hate them all ; for they separate me from my love.

Don't be worried about me. Love me as you love your eyes. No, that is not enough ; love

me as you love yourself—and not yourself only, but your thoughts, your mind. your life, your all. Darling, I'm raving, forgive me. Nature is a poor recompose for such feelings as mine, or for the man you love.

*Bonaparte.*

Good-bye, good-bye. I am going to bed—alone : I shall sleep—without you by my side. Please let me go to sleep. Night after night I feel you in my arms : it is such a happy dream : but alas, it is not yourself !

